



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

SECOND SESSION, 1922.

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# EIGHTH PARLIAMENT.

SECOND SESSION

## Governor-General.

His Excellency the Right Honorable HENRY WILLIAM, BARON FORSTER, a Member of His Majesty's Most Honorable Privy Council, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, and Commander-in-Chief of the Commonwealth of Australia.

## Australian National Government.

(From 21st December, 1921.)

|                                                  |                                                                 |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Prime Minister and Minister for External Affairs | The Right Honorable William Morris Hughes, P.C., K.C.           |
| Minister for Home and Territories                | Senator the Right Honorable George Foster Pearce, P.C.          |
| Minister for Repatriation                        | Senator the Honorable Edward Davis Millen.                      |
| Attorney-General                                 | The Honorable Littleton Ernest Groom.                           |
| Minister for Defence and Health                  | The Honorable Walter Massy Greene.                              |
| Postmaster-General                               | The Honorable Alexander Poynton, O.B.E.                         |
| Minister for Trade and Customs                   | The Honorable Arthur Stanislaus Rodgers.                        |
| Treasurer                                        | The Honorable Stanley Melbourne Bruce, M.C.                     |
| Minister for Works and Railways                  | The Honorable Richard Witty Foster.                             |
| Honorary Minister                                | The Honorable Sir Granville de Laune Ryrie, K.C.M.G., C.B. V.D. |
| Vice-President of the Executive Council          | Senator the Honorable John Earle.                               |
| Honorary Minister                                | The Honorable Hector Lamond.                                    |

Parliamentary Under Secretary for External Affairs Mr. Walter Moffitt Marks.

## Senators.

(From 1st July, 1920.)

President—Senator the Honorable Thomas Givens.

Chairman of Committees—Senator Thomas Jerome Kingston Bakha<sup>7</sup>.

|                                                               |                                                                  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| * Adamson, John, C.B.E. (Q.)                                  | * Glasgow, Sir Thomas William, K.C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., V.D. (Q.) |
| Bakha <sup>7</sup> , Thomas Jerome Kingston (T.)              | * Guthrie, James Francis (V.)                                    |
| * Benny, Benjamin (S.A.)                                      | * Guthrie, Robert Storrie (S.A.)                                 |
| Bolton, William Kinsey, C.B.E., V.D. (V.)                     | Henderson, George (W.A.)                                         |
| * Buzacott, Richard (W.A.)                                    | Keating, Hon. John Henry (T.)                                    |
| * Cox, Charles Frederick, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., V.D. (N.S.W.) | * Lynch, Patrick Joseph (W.A.)                                   |
| Crawford, Thomas William (Q.)                                 | * MacDonald, John Valentine (Q.)                                 |
| De Largie, Hon. Hugh (W.A.)                                   | Millen, Hon. Edward Davis (N.S.W.)                               |
| * Drake-Brockman, Edmund Alfred, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O. (W.A.)  | * Millen, John Dunlop (T.)                                       |
| * Duncan, Walter Leslie (N.S.W.)                              | * Newland, John, C.B.E. (S.A.)                                   |
| Earle, Hon. John (T.)                                         | * Payne, Hon. Herbert James Mockford (T.)                        |
| * Elliott, Harold Edward, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., D.C.M. (V.)   | * Pearce, Right Hon. George Foster (W.A.)                        |
| Fairbairn, George (V.)                                        | * Plain, William (V.)                                            |
| Foll, Hattil Spencer (Q.)                                     | * Pratten, Herbert Edward (N.S.W.)                               |
| * Foster, George Matthew (T.)                                 | Reid, Matthew (Q.)                                               |
| * Gardiner, Albert (N.S.W.)                                   | * Rowell, James, C.B., V.D. (S.A.)                               |
| * Garling, Henry Chester-Master (N.S.W.)                      | * Russell, Edward John (V.)                                      |
| * Givens, Hon. Thomas (Q.)                                    | Senior, William (S.A.)                                           |
|                                                               | Thomas, Hon. Josiah (N.S.W.)                                     |
|                                                               | * Vardon, Edward Charles (S.A.)                                  |
|                                                               | * Wilson, Reginald Victor (S.A.)                                 |

1. Appointed Temporary Chairman of Committees, 21st July 1920. Re-appointed, 29th June, 1922.—2. Elected, 13th December, 1919. Sworn, 21st July, 1920.—3. Appointed Temporary Chairman of Committees, 26th February, 1920. Re-appointed, 29th June, 1922.—4. Deceased reported, 6th April, 1921.—5. Appointed by State Governor in Council, 18th February, 1921. Sworn, 6th April, 1921. Appointment having expired, 24th November, 1921.—6. Resignation reported, 23rd June, 1922.—7. Elected, 13th December, 1921. Sworn, 1st July, 1920.—8. Chosen by State Parliament, 10th December, 1921. Sworn, 28th June, 1922.—9. Elected, 13th December, 1919. Sworn, 1st July, 1920.—10. Appointed by State Deputy Governor in Council, 26th May, 1922. Appointment ratified by State Parliament, 11th July, 1922. Sworn, 28th June, 1922.



Honorable members are aware that under the proposed redistribution the name "Barrier" will disappear from the electoral map, while the bulk of the old Barrier electors will be included in the new electorate of Darling. The position, so far as the new electorate of Darling is concerned, is that it is 50 per cent. old Barrier and 33 per cent. old Darling, while the remaining 17 per cent. is made up of subdivisions of the electorates of Gwydir, Calare, and Riverina. The name "Darling" has no real bearing upon the proposed new electorate. The only reason that the Commissioners could have had for applying it is that the River Darling waters a considerable portion of the electorate. The Darling, as honorable members are aware, takes its name from Governor Darling, whose memory is thus perpetuated. The honorable member who represents the present electorate of Darling can have no objection to the change of name unless it be one of sentiment because of his association with the old electorate. I want to make the new electorate neutral ground by substituting the name of the great Australian explorer who discovered the Darling and gave it the name of the then Governor of New South Wales.

Mr. McGRATH.—The name of "Sturt" is perpetuated to-day by its application to a magnificent street in Ballarat.

Mr. CONSIDINE.—I do not think that the application of the name to a mere side street in a relatively small town meets the requirement. I invite the honorable member (Mr. McGrath) to view this matter from a "broad national standpoint." I am not asking that the new electorate, which comprises 50 per cent. of the electors in the old division of Barrier, shall be re-named "Barrier"; I merely urge that the name of a famous explorer be substituted for that which has been chosen by the Commissioners.

Mr. BAMFORD.—The honorable member desires that the present representatives of the divisions of Barrier and Darling shall start off scratch.

Mr. CONSIDINE.—The honorable member may take that view if he pleases. The change of name which I propose will confer no advantage on myself or on my possible opponent at the next election, the present representative of the electorate of Darling. I submit the amendment, and

honorable members may please themselves whether or not they adopt my suggestion.

Mr. BLAKELEY (Darling) [10.52].—I oppose the amendment for reasons which I think will be sufficiently strong to insure its rejection. The honorable member for Barrier (Mr. Considine) seeks to perpetuate the name of "Sturt," the great Australian explorer, but the memory of that great man is already perpetuated in many ways. The name has been applied to many fine streets and to a beautiful Australian flower, while in various cities statues in remembrance of Sturt have been raised.

Mr. SCULLIN.—The finest street in Australia—Sturt-street, Ballarat—is named after him.

Mr. BLAKELEY.—And last but not least the name is perpetuated by the State electorate of Sturt, which practically embraces the whole of the new electorate of Darling and comprises an enormous area of country. I do not know what more is needed to perpetuate the name of the great explorer. We have had the name "Darling" applied to a Federal electorate from the inception of the Commonwealth. The River Darling practically runs right through this new electorate. The names of most of the great rivers of Australia have been applied to Federal constituencies. We have, for instance, the divisions of Darling, Nepean, Cook, Hunter, Parramatta, Gwydir, Swan, and Yarra.

The gravest objection I have to the amendment is that the whole of the new electorate of Darling, with the exception of the subdivisions of Hay, Condobolin, and Walgett, is included within the State electorate of Sturt, and that to have a State and Federal electorate both bearing the same name and covering practically the same area would lead to great confusion. In the event of the State and Federal elections being conducted about the same time, it is only natural to assume that there would be considerable confusion in the handling of ballot-boxes. On the claim cards the name Sturt would be confusing to the electors, and all the documents which necessarily pass through the post in connexion with an election would necessarily be directed to the returning officer for the district of Sturt at a specified town, and further confusion



would follow. In addition, an elector may have his name placed on the State roll for Sturt, and would, therefore, be under the impression that he was on the Commonwealth roll for the district bearing the same name. I think it is the duty of Parliament to make the work of the electors as easy as possible; but to name the district Sturt instead of Darling, as suggested by the honorable member for Barrier (Mr. Considine), would lead to great confusion, and the proposal is one with which I do not think the House should agree. Broken Hill is the present centre of the State Sturt electorate, where the returning officer is situated, and I anticipate that the Divisional Returning Officer for the proposed new electorate will also be stationed at Broken Hill. Such a condition would bring about confusion by having the two officers at the one centre, and, as I have mentioned, the confusion in regard to ballot-boxes and electoral printed matter would be so great in effectively carrying out the provisions of the electoral law that I hope the House will retain the name Darling, which it has had for the last twenty-one years.

Amendment negatived.

**Mr. LAVELLE** (Calare) [10.59].—I intend to oppose the scheme submitted by the Commissioners for the redistribution in the State of New South Wales, because after having given consideration to the proposals as submitted to Parliament, I find that the Commissioners, in drawing up their scheme as far as certain electorates are concerned, and particularly the one I have the honor to represent, have not given due consideration to the community or diversity of interest, means of communication, physical features, and existing State and Federal boundaries. Considerable alterations have been made in my electorate. In the first place, the subdivision of Grenfell, which was taken from the old Werriwa electorate, has been added, as well as a portion of the old Werriwa electorate immediately adjoining Calare. The subdivision of Young has been placed in the Hume electorate, although, as far as community of interest is concerned, these subdivisions should be in the one electorate, as there is a community of interest between Young and Grenfell, and the subdivision has

been made in an area which is practically the same in its interests. There is little community of interest between Grenfell and one portion of Calare, and any one can see by a brief glance at the plan, that in the Hume electorate, the great portion of which is in the vicinity of the Victorian border, there cannot be any community of interest between that small section in the north, which takes in the Young subdivision, and which should be placed in the same electorate as Grenfell. I do not see why the subdivision of Young should not be in the Calare electorate, and if that subdivision is not included in Calare, the subdivision of Grenfell should not be, because there is a distinct community of interest between both places. On the northern portion of Calare electorate, the subdivision of Peak Hill and Dubbo has been taken from the Darling electorate, and both of these subdivisions are either on or adjacent to the main western railway line, which runs through Dubbo and Orange, where there are stock markets and principal centres of population. One cannot imagine why the distribution has been made in the manner submitted when there are no reasonable means of communication and community of interest between the Dubbo and Peak Hill subdivisions and the great bulk of the Gwydir electorate. The whole of the residents living in these subdivisions must travel through Calare electorate in order to go to Sydney, and they must also despatch their produce in the same direction. Their postal and telegraph communications and their supplies from Sydney pass through the districts named, and for these reasons the subdivisions should be within the Calare electorate. I am not discussing the proposals from a personal stand-point, because there is in the eastern portion of the present electorate the subdivision of Lucknow, the electors of which are opposed to Labour; but I suggest that that should be placed in the Calare electorate, because it is really a part of the district. For the reasons I have briefly outlined I trust the proposal will be rejected and the whole scheme returned to New South Wales. The honorable member for Parramatta (Mr. Pratten) directed attention to the confusion likely to be caused in the district which he represents, and I believe that



if members give their unbiased opinions they must admit that the Commissioners have unintentionally violated the terms of their commission, and have not taken into consideration those points which are of vital interest, and which are clearly set out in the Electoral Act.

**Mr. BOWDEN** (Nepean) [11.4].—The proposed redistribution scheme in New South Wales is hotch-potch in character, and does not commend itself to me. In the electorate which I represent the local governing bodies have lodged a protest against the elimination of the Nepean electorate. As it is at present constituted, there is a community of interests which will have been altogether dispersed if the proposed scheme is adopted. The whole of the electorate at present is a fruit-growing and small farming community. The fruit-growing areas are proposed to be separated, however. Part of the electorate is to be tacked on to Robertson, which electorate extends so far as to take in Mudgee and Singleton. Those portions of the Hawkesbury district which have been so cut off from Nepean have no community of interest with Robertson. Still another piece is to be tacked on to Macquarie, while another is to help form the new electorate of Martin, and still another is proposed to be added to Werriwa. Naturally, the electors of Nepean are incensed with the Commissioners. Had the Commonwealth representative been better acquainted with the New South Wales districts the proposed redistribution would have been of a far different character. It was unfortunate in this sense that Mr. McLaren, who has been in the electoral office ever since the Federation, should have been recently removed from his post to take up the secretaryship of the Department, and that Mr. Irwin, who is a first-class officer but who has had no previous knowledge of New South Wales, should have found the redistribution scheme his first big task upon his transfer to New South Wales from Tasmania. Had there been a representative with such knowledge of the conditions of the State as Mr. McLaren has shown in previous redistributions, the present scheme would have been very different. The new electorate of Parramatta has been described as a country constituency—an extra-metropolitan area. It is no such thing. The majority of its residents are

metropolitan electors. The proposed plan of redistribution, instead of preserving the number of electorates, in the metropolitan area and in the country, has so altered matters that there are actually fourteen metropolitan and fourteen country electorates. The Commissioners say that they are making fifteen country and thirteen metropolitan electorates. Such is not the case. A far better distribution could have been planned. My constituents have protested as strongly and earnestly as those represented by the honorable member for Parramatta (Mr. Pratten). If the proposition for New South Wales is sent back to the Commissioners something far more acceptable could be devised.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

## ADJOURNMENT.

### REDISTRIBUTION OF SEATS: ORDER OF BUSINESS.

Motion (by Mr. HUGHES) proposed—

That the House do now adjourn.

**Mr. PRATTEN** (Parramatta) [11.8].

—I desire to point out, Mr. Speaker, that when you declared the motion just previously under discussion agreed to on the voices, there were two “Noes.” The honorable member for Nepean (Mr. Bowden) and I had just spoken against the redistribution scheme in New South Wales, and we both called “No” when the question was put from the Chair. It was my intention to call for a division.

**Mr. SPEAKER** (Hon. Sir Elliot Johnson).—I point out to the honorable member for Parramatta that no division was called for, although some honorable members may have called “No.” When the question was put from the Chair, and I had announced the decision to be in the negative, no one challenged the decision. When the Speaker announces a decision, if a division is called for, the “Noes” or the “Ayes” call, as the case may be, again. It is too late now, however, for the honorable member to suggest that he be given an opportunity to call for a division.

**Mr. PRATTEN**.—The circumstances, I think, sir, are very similar to those wherein the honorable member for Eden-Monaro (Mr. Austin Chapman) was involved earlier in the evening. However, I must accept your ruling.



Mr. SPEAKER.—Once a decision has been given it cannot be retracted in the manner in which the honorable member would now desire. If honorable members will pay a little more attention to the rules of procedure and will converse less loudly—indeed, not at all—while important decisions are being announced from the Chair, confusion such as this will not arise. As a matter of fact, there is no confusion in the present instance, or there should not be, in the mind of any honorable member. I clearly and fairly stated the decision of the House upon the motion under debate, so far as I could see and interpret it; and it was not challenged. It cannot be challenged now.

Mr. CHARLTON (Hunter) [11.12].—I am anxious to learn what business will come before the House to-morrow. I understand that the Standing Orders were suspended in order that the House might deal with the proposed electoral redistribution in New South Wales. Then the House was to deal with the Washington Conference Treaties. I take it that honorable members will next proceed to discuss the question of sugar. Can the Prime Minister indicate the order of business for Friday?

Mr. HUGHES (Bendigo—Prime Minister and Minister for External Affairs) [11.13].—The first matter to receive the attention of honorable members to-morrow must be the Washington Conference Treaties. I have received a cablegram from London to-day pointing out that we are, apparently, the last to ratify the Treaties. That is a reflection upon us, because I am quite sure the whole Commonwealth Parliament approves of them. It is urgent that our formal approval shall be given forthwith. I did not notice that my colleague the Attorney-General had only placed one motion before the House in connexion with redistribution. I shall have to consider what we are to do to-morrow in regard to the matter, but it is clear that the House will have to address itself to the motions relating to the Washington Conference Treaties at the earliest possible moment.

Mr. CHARLTON.—We agreed to the suspension of the Standing Orders to enable the Government to deal with two things,

and we are expecting to be given an opportunity to debate the sugar question.

Mr. HUGHES.—All I can say now is that the motions of which my colleague has given notice are first in order on the business-paper, and that the only interpolation will be in relation to the Treaties which I brought before the House yesterday.

Mr. CHARLTON.—Will the debate on the sugar question follow the consideration of the Treaties?

Mr. HUGHES.—I have no objection to it following after the Washington Conference motions and the notices of motion relating to the redistribution of seats have been disposed of.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

House adjourned at 11.17 p.m.

## Senate.

Friday, 28 July, 1922.

The PRESIDENT (Senator the Hon. T. Givens) took the chair at 11 a.m., and read prayers.

## TIMBER.

### SALE OF PROPERTIES TO QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT.

Senator MACDONALD.—I ask the Minister for Repatriation whether the Government are proceeding with the offer to sell the Canungra timber properties stated to have been made to the Queensland Government or are considering the offer of the property to a private firm?

Senator E. D. MILLEN.—I assume that the honorable member's question is directed to an offer made by the Queensland Government. They have offered only to purchase one very small portion of the freehold area of the property referred to.

## NORTHERN TERRITORY.

### PROTECTION OF ABORIGINALS.

Senator BENNY asked the Minister for Home and Territories, *upon notice*—

1. Has the Minister's attention been drawn to a report that at the Port Darwin Police Court an aboriginal was charged with hawking his lubra, Nutta, a child of twelve, about for immoral purposes among the Chinese at Parap, and that she is alleged to be suffering



from venereal disease, and that the magistrate, Major Hogan, said he could not commit the child to prison, but some form of control should be exercised by the Aborigines Department over such girls?

2. Will the Government take immediate steps, by Ordinance or otherwise, to endeavour to protect aboriginal girls from vicious and degraded husbands and other men?

Senator PEARCE.—The answers are—

1. Yes.

2. The provisions of the existing Aborigines Ordinance and Regulations are considered adequate for this purpose. The Protector is empowered to undertake the care, custody, or control of any aboriginal or half-caste, if, in his opinion, it is necessary or desirable in the interests of the aboriginal or half-caste, and, in addition, he is the legal guardian of every aboriginal and half-caste child, notwithstanding that the child has a parent or other relative living, until such child attains the age of eighteen years. Drastic penalties are also provided for offences of the character mentioned in the report. In the instance under notice the husband was sentenced to imprisonment for the offence committed by him, and action is being taken through the Administrator in regard to other features of the case.

## TAXATION.

### PERCENTAGE PAID BY STATES.

Senator DE LARGIE (for Senator THOMAS) asked the Minister representing the Treasurer, *upon notice*—

1. What percentage of income tax, land tax, and Customs duties is paid by the various States to the Commonwealth Treasury?

2. What is the percentage on all taxation paid by each State to the Commonwealth Treasury?

Senator E. D. MILLEN.—The information is being prepared, and will be furnished as soon as possible.

### LEAD CONCENTRATES.

#### EXPORT DUTY.

Senator WILSON asked the Minister representing the Minister for Trade and Customs, *upon notice*—

1. Is it a fact that the B.H.A. Smelters is the only lead smelting works in operation in Australia? If so, would not the imposition of a duty on lead concentrates create a monopoly for the B.H.A. Smelters? Would not the result of a duty on lead concentrates eliminate all competition and give the B.H.A. Smelters the control of the Australian lead output, and so create a monopoly for the B.H.A. Smelters?

2. In the event of the Commonwealth Government imposing an export duty on lead concentrates, what steps does it propose to take in order to safeguard the interests of producers?

3. If the B.H.A. Smelters obtain a monopoly, would they not be able to restrict Australian production of lead by increasing its returning charges to produce, and thus closing up some of the lower-grade mines?

4. Is it a fact that the B.H.A. Smelters itself has exported lead concentrates?

5. Is it a fact that the B.H.A. Smelters, in addition to smelting lead ores in Australia, has carried on extensive speculations in the metal market?

6. Would not an export duty on lead concentrates close up some of the lower-grade mines, and so decrease employment?

7. What reason is there for placing an export duty on lead concentrates and not upon zinc concentrates, or other exportable commodities such as wool, wheat, &c.?

8. Did the restriction on the export of ore and ore concentrates during the war lead to the establishment of any new works in Australia?

Senator EARLE.—The Minister for Trade and Customs has supplied the following answers:—

As to the first part of Question 1.—I do not think it is a fact.

As to the rest of Question 1, and to Questions 2, 3, 6, and 7.—The Commonwealth Government has not yet made any proposal for an export duty, and I cannot answer hypothetical questions. But I would point out that the honorable senator's questions do not cover the whole ground of the protection of Australian industries from destruction by unfair competition. There are dangers of monopolies outside Australia as well as inside.

4. Yes.

5. I do not know. I assume the company markets its products.

8. Yes. Not only were new works established, but existing works were largely increased.

## ELECTORAL BILL.

### SECOND READING.

Debate resumed from 26th July (*vide* page 752), on motion by Senator PEARCE—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Senator MacDONALD (Queensland) [11.5].—The Minister for Home and Territories (Senator Pearce), in moving the second reading of this Bill, told us that it was largely a machinery measure, and we may be somewhat assured by that statement that it is not loaded. There is, however, one matter upon which I desire to be satisfied. The Minister stressed the importance of the provisions for the grouping of candidates, but I am more concerned about the provisions affecting itinerant electors which appear to me to constitute a somewhat doubtful reform.



This Bill must be read in conjunction with the principal Act, and as even lawyers will differ as to the interpretation of legislative provisions, it is not a little difficult to discover what is proposed in this measure. I am sorry that I am able only to depend on the impressions I formed from listening to the Minister's remarks in moving the second reading, as we have, so far, not been placed in possession of the *Hansard* report of his speech. That is very regrettable. It cannot tend to the proper consideration of the business of the Senate to have Government measures rushed through before honorable senators can have the assistance of a full *Hansard* report of the Minister's remarks.

Senator PEARCE.—The honorable senator might have obtained a proof of my remarks at any time by asking for it.

Senator MACDONALD.—These proofs should be at the disposal of honorable senators without the necessity of having to ask for them. The Minister may smile, but any one possessing a business mind will agree with me.

Senator PEARCE.—The honorable senator would not give one an opportunity to correct his proofs.

Senator MACDONALD.—We certainly should have more information at our disposal than we have at the present time in discussing this measure. I happened to be present when the Minister moved the second reading of the Bill, but I might have been away at the time.

Senator EARLE.—The honorable senator should not be away.

Senator MACDONALD.—We know that at times two-thirds of the members of the Senate are not present in this chamber.

Senator ROWELL.—Ministers are themselves away sometimes.

Senator MACDONALD.—That is so. On occasions two-thirds of the representatives of the Government in this Chamber are away. I suggest that it would be better as a matter of routine to provide all necessary facilities to enable honorable senators to properly discuss the business submitted to this Chamber. I have said that I am somewhat doubtful as to how the Bill will affect the people in whom I am specially interested. The itinerant electors of Australia for the most part

belong to the workers whom I have the honour to represent. It is unfortunate that quite a number of people are not in a position to depend on a settled occupation.

Senator ROWELL.—A good many of the idle rich are in the same position.

Senator MACDONALD.—They would not represent one in ten of the electors of the working class who are so placed. The provisions to which I specially refer will not affect miners to any great extent, but they will affect shearers, rouseabouts, and other pastoral workers, and also workers in the sugar industry, men who have to travel long distances from place to place in order to earn a living. I understand this matter, because in my boyhood I lived with my parents in the back-blocks of Australia, and I know that some of the men who have to follow the occupations to which I have referred are of the small farmer class, who are the backbone of the country. Instead of putting obstacles in the way of such men we should rather provide facilities to enable them to exercise political control.

Senator SENIOR.—Does the honorable senator not think that an electoral right should remain practically where the domicile of the elector is?

Senator MACDONALD.—That might be so, if every one were fortunate enough to have a settled domicile. Itinerant electors are sometimes insulted by being told that they have not a stake in the country, but they often include farmers who, in order to earn necessary funds, have at times to go into the shearing sheds or canefields to do so. I believe that these people should be assisted in every possible way to a position of equality with other citizens of the Commonwealth. I have formed the impression that the Bill will give power to other people to strike a blow at the electoral rights of the nomadic worker. I may be mistaken in that view, and the Minister may be able to make that clear to me later on. The Minister stated that it was proposed to tighten up the machinery so that an elector could vote only in the district of which he was a *bonâ fide* resident. I would point out that a man might be a *bonâ fide* resident after working for two or three months in a district. The proposal would place too much power in the hands of the individuals who make a



living by scrutinizing electoral rolls, and often designedly rushing in to strike off the roll the names of those people whose political views are different from their own.

Senator EARLE.—Roll “doctors.”

Senator MACDONALD.—They are worse than that.

Senator GARLING.—Are they actually making a living out of it? We cannot afford that.

Senator RUSSELL.—They are all paid servants of the Government.

Senator MACDONALD.—Apart from the electoral officers, there are a number of people employed by the political organizations having the most money.

Senator DRAKE-BROCKMAN.—You refer, of course, to the Labour party.

Senator MACDONALD.—No; I do not refer to the Labour party, and this clause certainly has not been framed in the interests of that party. The Minister said that there was a possibility of a number of itinerant persons assembling themselves at the poll in a particular division. That is the only shadow of an excuse that the Minister has for desiring to put this very dangerous provision on the statute-book. When I refer to the people who scrutinize the rolls, I have not in mind the paid officials, although there is often necessity for a close oversight of the powers they exercise.

Senator RUSSELL.—You seem to overlook the fact that it is compulsory to enroll.

Senator MACDONALD.—While we make enrolment compulsory, this proposal will make it more difficult for an elector to vote.

Senator VARDON.—Are there 60,000 more names on the Queensland State roll than on the Federal roll?

Senator MACDONALD.—There is always a considerable excess in every State, but the object in every democratic country should be to encourage every citizen to exercise the franchise. The Denham-Barnes Government in 1915 passed an Act in Queensland to make voting compulsory. That was a very proper thing to do, but a provision like the one under consideration places obstacles in the way of an elector voting. It would be better that ten men should vote twice than that one intelligent Australian should be prevented from doing so.

Senator BAKHAP.—The intentional impersonators would swamp his vote altogether.

Senator MACDONALD.—I do not believe that impersonation at election time has ever affected a single contest in the Commonwealth. The Minister will well remember the year 1913, when there was a Labour Government in power. As the election results came in, the party opposed to Labour raised a howl. It was said by a gentleman who once occupied a seat in this Chamber, that “Labour had raised the very dead to vote for them” at that election. An honorable member in another place—a Queenslander—made certain statements about corruption existing throughout Australia in connexion with electoral matters, and he felt compelled to move for the appointment of a Royal Commission to investigate the position. That Commission visited every part of the Commonwealth. It may have cost more than the Minister’s visit to Washington, but, judging by the results, that visit was certainly worth ten times more than the money paid for the Royal Commission.

Senator WILSON.—Perhaps it was because the Minister brought back the truth, and the Commission did not.

Senator MACDONALD.—So far as I remember not a single case of impersonation or corruption was discovered.

Senator DRAKE-BROCKMAN.—The electoral machinery itself prevents any discovery.

Senator VARDON.—It is so difficult to prove breaches of the law.

Senator MACDONALD.—I am quite satisfied that, so far as the Labour party is concerned, there would not be a single case of double voting. In a small electorate that danger may exist, but in a division with 30,000 or 40,000 voters the risk is practically non-existent.

Senator GARLING.—Is it not because the safeguards are being tightened up from time to time? Would you withdraw these?

Senator MACDONALD.—While on the one hand we are compelling people to enroll, it is proposed to take steps to nullify that position.

Senator SENIOR.—You cannot see any use for this clause?



Senator MACDONALD.—I see an absolute danger, so far as the people I represent are concerned. Rather should they have their names placed on a dozen rolls, so long as they do not vote more than once, than that they should be disfranchised.

Senator WILSON.—Should not the Government take reasonable precautions against abuse?

Senator MACDONALD.—The precautions taken in the past twenty years have been considered reasonable.

Senator DRAKE-BROCKMAN. — Governments learn by experience, and it is now said that there should be a tightening up.

Senator MACDONALD.—As I have not a full *Hansard* report of the Minister's speech, I am dependent—as I have already pointed out—on the newspaper reports, and on my memory. Every effort should be made to encourage the granting of electoral facilities to the workers and small farmers, who are the backbone of the country.

Senator GARLING.—Can they not vote as absentees?

Senator VARDON.—They are not deprived of the vote.

Senator MACDONALD.—Any proposal tending to prevent a citizen from voting should be resisted.

Senator SENIOR.—This clause will not put a single man off the roll.

Senator MACDONALD.—It will apparently reduce the facilities for voting. According to the Minister's statement, his idea seems to be that people would have a burning desire to vote in several electorates. That is a slur on the general honesty of Australians, and past experience has shown that such a safeguard is unnecessary. The nomadic workers, unfortunately, have to travel hundreds of miles to obtain work.

Senator WILSON.—I have to travel a thousand miles a week to work, and I am only home two days a week.

Senator MACDONALD.—The honorable senator has a more settled domicile than the workers whom I have in mind. He cannot claim the same sympathy as they are entitled to. In the absence of a full report of the Minister's second-reading speech, I am at a great disadvantage in endeavouring to debate the various clauses of the Bill, but when the measure is in Committee I

shall have a further opportunity of discussing those points on which I now need enlightenment. I am particularly anxious that the bush workers, whom this measure will largely affect if it becomes law in its present form, shall not be severely handicapped, because, as it is drafted, it appears merely to protect the interests and convenience of those who are supporting the Government.

Senator SENIOR.—Not at all.

Senator MACDONALD.—It certainly has not been drafted to protect the interests of country workers and to increase their facilities for voting, and I shall keep my eyes open to see that the nomadic workers are fully protected. With compulsory enrolment, it is the duty of the Government to see that men whose duties call them from place to place are not deprived of the privileges enjoyed by those who have steady occupation in one centre. The Commission to which I have referred reported that during probably the most exciting time in Australian political history the amount of impersonation was so trifling as to be almost unworthy of consideration, and it would, therefore, appear that the tightening up of the law in this connexion is hardly necessary.

The grouping system, which is embodied in this measure, has certain objectionable features, but on the whole the principle is one which should commend itself to the majority of the Senate. The system will undoubtedly help electors to record an intelligent decision, because when there are a number of names on the ballot-paper voters who do not follow the political situation very closely are not quite clear as to which party the different candidates represent, in which case they record either informal votes or votes which do not express their real intention. Since the introduction of the doubtful preferential system of voting for the Senate, and the advent of the so-called Country party—

Senator DRAKE-BROCKMAN. — I like that.

Senator MACDONALD.—I am waiting to see—

Senator DRAKE-BROCKMAN. — Which way the cat jumps.

Senator MACDONALD.—No; that is what the Country party is doing. Can



the honorable senator prove that the interests of a squatter in Queensland, who is an acquaintance of mine and who has sixty-two holdings, are not closely allied with Nationalist or Tory interests? I can mention the names of numerous men in Queensland who are extensively engaged in the business of grazing and sheep-raising who are supporters of the so-called Country party.

Senator WILSON.—Why should the honorable senator object to that? Are not their interests in the country?

Senator MACDONALD.—Men of the type I have mentioned are naturally supporters of Conservative principles. Senator Wilson, who is a representative of the Country party, is opposed to the continuance of the Commonwealth Line of Steamers, but, so far as I have been able to study the programme of the Country party, which has very strong Victorian representation in another place, one of its most important planks is the continuance of the Commonwealth Line of Steamers.

The PRESIDENT (Senator the Hon. T. Givens).—I direct the honorable senator's attention to the fact that the policy of the Country party has nothing to do with the provisions of this Bill.

Senator MACDONALD.—When I was led away by interjections I was referring to the grouping system, and saying that it was one that should be acceptable in any Democracy.

Senator WILSON.—Did the honorable senator obtain his seat in this Chamber in a democratic way?

Senator MACDONALD.—Yes, I topped the poll at the Labour plebiscite, and even if the most humble worker in Queensland had attained that position he would have been where I am standing to-day.

Senator SENIOR.—Can the honorable senator vouch for the purity of the Democracy?

Senator MACDONALD.—There is corruption on all sides, but I do not think it can be said that £25,000 has ever been subscribed in connexion with our party.

Senator DRAKE-BROCKMAN.—Should not a Nationalist be standing in the place of the honorable senator?

Senator MACDONALD.—The honorable senator must remember that two and

a half years have passed since the Federal electors in Queensland were consulted, and it is unreasonable to suggest that the opinions of the electors in that State have not changed during that time. It is quite possible that if an election were held now the party which I am representing would secure a majority at the polls and Labour members would be returned. If an election is held within a couple of months, as the Leader of the Government in another place (Mr. Hughes) suggested, possibly the tables may be turned, because it needs only 10,000 electors out of 300,000 electors in the State I represent to change their political opinions, and I would be here elected by the people. The preferential system increases the number of candidates for parliamentary honours. I have an open mind concerning the working of that system, but the mathematical problems involved lead to considerable doubt as to whether the system gives the best results from a democratic standpoint.

Senator BAKHAP.—Does the honorable senator regard the system employed in connexion with Senate elections as a preferential system?

Senator MACDONALD.—It is, in effect.

Senator BAKHAP.—Very remotely. It is to prevent minorities defeating majorities.

Senator MACDONALD.—However, the so-called preferential system will lead to a multiplicity of candidates which it will be necessary to group in order to enable some electors to record their votes as they desire.

Senator WILSON.—Does the honorable senator not think that it will mislead the electors?

Senator MACDONALD.—Probably the honorable senator will be able to enlighten us concerning the proposal; but he must admit that elderly men and women who are not altogether conversant with the names of the representatives of the different parties, those who are short-sighted or are otherwise infirm, and even a few who may have imbibed too freely, will be assisted in voting. Generally speaking, Federal elections have been carried out in the most satisfactory manner, and the grouping system will be the means of removing some of the difficulties which now exist.



I shall have an opportunity when the Bill is in Committee to speak upon other aspects of it, but I have taken advantage of my privilege on the second reading to emphasize my doubts regarding the clause relating to itinerant voters, and to seek from the Minister a more satisfactory explanation of it than I have yet been able to obtain. I do not intend to discuss the Bill seriatim. The important part of it relating to the grouping system is one which, generally, I support, and I hope members of this Chamber will assist to place it on the statute-book.

**Senator GARLING** (New South Wales) [11.46].—Without intending to discuss the Bill in detail, I desire to say that, taking it all in all, it will amend the Electoral Act in a very desirable direction. But the group system, which is absolutely new in our electoral machinery, I would support for only one reason, namely, so that the elector may be better guided in his task of voting. I do not think that I am overstating the case when I say that, when there is a large number of candidates, a majority of the electors cast their votes without a sufficient knowledge of the personality of the candidates and the policies they represent. It would only be in order that there might be a wider distribution of knowledge of the candidates, parties, and policies represented at an election that I would favour an alteration of the Act in the direction of grouping; but I am not going to support the grouping system in the form now proposed. I think it is going to make confusion worse confounded, because it proposes a mere cypher designation instead of honestly recognising the existence of parties. Party, after all, is only another name for organization. We must have organizations in every walk of life, including politics. The grouping system only recognises parties under certain alphabetical designations, and the electors will be more confused when they are asked to vote for a group whose political views are announced to them under the designation of a letter of the alphabet than they are to-day. If the group system is accepted by Parliament, I hope it will be accepted in such a form that the electors will know to which party a candidate belongs. We shall, no doubt, have a good deal of clamour raised in the press

and elsewhere to the effect that another attempt is being made to foist the party machine on the people; but it is no use shutting our eyes to the fact that parties have come to stay. It ought to be recognised that Jones is standing in the interests of the National party, Brown for the Progressive or Country party, and Smith for the Labour party. Personally, I would prefer to abandon the idea of the group system, and mark against the name of every candidate the policy or party which he professes and supports.

**Senator MACDONALD**.—Will not the grouping of three or four names of men belonging to a particular party signify to even the dullest elector that they are members of that party?

**Senator GARLING**.—That might apply in a small State like Tasmania, where, according to what I have been told, one has only to use a megaphone at one end of the island to be heard at the other end. In a large State like New South Wales or Queensland the position is quite different. A man living, say, at Bourke may be unknown in the city of Sydney, and he has to be an outstanding figure to be elected simply on his name. If he were announced as the member of a certain party, as it is justifiable he should be while we have the party system, then the electors would know for whom they were being asked to vote, and for what policy or party. Unless the Act is altered in a way that will indicate to the electors which policies the candidates favour, I shall not support that portion of the Bill.

Assuming, however, that we are going to have the group system, there is a danger in the wording of clause 3 of the Bill, sub-section 2 of which provides—

A group of candidates shall not be formed unless each of the members of the proposed group notifies the Commonwealth Electoral Officer . . . that he desires to have his name included in that group.

There is a danger in not having machinery to indicate how the group is to be formed. There may be three men—Brown, Smith, and Jones—who each desire to be grouped together. Robinson comes along, and, without conferring with the other three, and probably for the purpose of breaking up the group, asks to be included.

**Senator PEARCE**.—That is provided for in the Bill. He cannot get in the group without the consent of those who are in it.



Senator GARLING.—In that case, then, the group cannot be formed. Sub-clause 2 of proposed new section 72A says that a group of candidates shall not be formed unless each of the members of the proposed group expresses his desire to have his name included. What is to prevent the fourth man from saying he proposes to be a member of the group?

Senator PEARCE.—That clause prevents it. The group has to be a mutual and joint concern.

Senator GARLING.—I would like the Minister to consider the sub-clause again a little more clearly. It reads—

(2) A group of candidates shall not be formed unless each of the members of the proposed group notifies the Commonwealth Electoral Officer for the State in the prescribed manner after he has been nominated, and not later than 12 o'clock noon on the day of nomination, that he desires to have his name included in that group with the names of the other candidates in that proposed group, and with those names only.

The result of that provision might be that a group could not be formed because a fourth man chose to come along and say, "I want to be in that group, and the others will not have me."

Senator PEARCE.—The honorable member's contention is wrong.

Senator GARLING.—It may be wrong; but I want to bring my view under the Minister's attention, so that he may further consider it and make sure whether, after all, I am not right.

There is another feature of the Bill to which I wish to refer because of the remarks of Senator MacDonald. He has pointed out that there is, apparently, an insinuation in the proposed amendment of section 115 that the adherents of a certain party are in the habit of not honestly recording their votes. There is no such insinuation. The object is simply to prevent—what we know does happen—a turnover from one subdivision to another of a large body of electors for the purpose of swaying a vote. Men who are not *bonâ fide* living in a subdivision have still postal or absentee votes whereby they can record their votes for their own subdivision. The Bill aims at securing that men who really live in a subdivision, and whose interests are in it, shall vote for it, and for no other. It will not prevent men who are away from their subdivision on election day from voting for that subdivision, because there is other machinery to enable them to do that.

Senator WILSON.—I take it that the clause would prevent big public works from being started in a district for the purpose of securing the return of a certain candidate.

Senator GARLING.—I think that is so. While a man should very properly be prevented from casting a vote for a subdivision in which he does not reside at the time, there ought not to be any suggestion of preventing him from casting a vote for the Senate, the electoral division of which is the whole State, simply because he does not live in the particular subdivision in which he seeks to vote. I am inclined to think that a safeguard in that direction has not been provided, and I draw the Minister's attention to the clause, so that consideration can be given to it when we get into Committee. We ought to prevent a drift over from one subdivision to another; but we ought not to put obstacles in the way of a man voting for the State in which he lives. I want to make it clear in response to a remark that was made while the Minister was explaining the Bill, to the effect that the party I represent has been called upon to support the Bill *holus-bolus*, that if the clause of the Bill relating to grouping is regarded as vital—that is to say, if the Government declare that they will insist upon it or withdraw the Bill—then I shall exercise what I consider to be my judgment, and cast a vote against the grouping system as now provided for in the Bill, whether it affects the passage of the Bill or not.

Senator BAKHAP (Tasmania) [12.0].

—In discussing an Electoral Bill and considering provisions that are introduced in a non-party spirit, but rather with the intention that they shall be efficacious in facilitating the work of electoral officers and recording the suffrages of electors, there can be very little contention except in regard to the actual merits of the provisions proposed. I am not going to analyze this measure for the purpose of discussing very many of the amendments of the existing law which it embodies. I am on my feet on this occasion to enter my protest against the attempted introduction of the grouping system, and the indication of certain groups on the ballot-paper itself. I do not accuse the members of the Administration of having subordinated themselves to the necessities or representations of outside organizations in this matter. I



do not believe that they have been so influenced, but I do believe that honorable senators individually, or perhaps in certain groups, have been influenced in regard to their opinion on this matter by the covert attitude of outside political organizations.

Senator WILSON.—That applies to all questions.

Senator BAKHAP.—No, it does not.

Senator WILSON.—Then, why any parties?

Senator BAKHAP.—This measure represents an attempt to get party into the ballot-box, not in the ordinary sense of the voter exercising his individual suffrage, but by putting something before him that is only shadowed forth at present and not clearly expressed to give him some knowledge of party grouping.

Senator GARLING.—Why not?

Senator BAKHAP.—I say why do this? I set up an opposition of opinion to the justice of the proposition implied in the honorable senator's question, "Why not?" The Constitution has no knowledge of political parties. It expresses no opinion on them. It is concerned only with the men to be elected by the electors to represent them in this Chamber—because honorable senators must bear in mind that this Chamber will be particularly affected by the provision embodied in the Bill now before it, to which I direct special attention.

Just as we are censors of legislation that comes up to us from another place, I hope that honorable members in another place will not forget that they are constitutionally censors of what goes to them from this Chamber. This provision, for the very arguments I am about to use, was either rejected or withdrawn before; but I believe that unhappily it is likely on the present occasion to be passed by the Senate. Honorable senators will be acting very unwisely and with a very imperfect knowledge of the psychology of the Australian people, if they subscribe to the passing of such a provision.

It is true that there is a certain sheepishness about the human race that compels people very often to do what is indicated as desirable by a few. There is a good deal of the follow-my-leader business about the human race. At the same time, I believe that the best intellects amongst the people and the electors who give most consideration to the affairs

of the nation are those who say, "Do not let us hear so much about your machine. Bring out your men."

Senator MACDONALD.—What about measures?

Senator BAKHAP.—We shall never get bad measures from good men.

Senator MACDONALD.—The trouble is to find the good men.

Senator BAKHAP.—The electors are afforded ample opportunity to find them. The Senate is being asked in this measure to subscribe to an absolute indictment of Democracy by introducing the grouping system into the ballot-box. Honorable senators are assuming that the electors are so grossly ignorant of politics and of events that make the history of the nation that, notwithstanding that illiteracy has disappeared in this country, they do not know how to record an intelligent vote.

Senator GARLING.—I did not say that.

Senator GUTHRIE.—They are going to be asked to vote for a letter instead of a man.

Senator BAKHAP.—That letter will be put forward to indicate the name of the political party to which a candidate professes to belong. The names of political parties are not suggested on this occasion, because some honorable senators who favour this step are not quite sure of their game. They are not quite sure that what is proposed will not be resented by the electors.

We have been told that the system proposed has been in operation in America for years. That is no argument in support of its adoption in Australia. It is well known that I am an admirer of the American Constitution in regard to several of its features. I am very glad that the men who framed the Constitution of the Commonwealth took that of the United States of America as their model. But when the American Constitution was framed it was drawn up by men who were the representatives of a population in the United States of America which differed very greatly in number and character from the present population of that country, which includes groups, in some instances, of hundreds of thousands of almost illiterate Eastern Europeans. The introduction of the group system into the ballot-box in America was clearly due to the influence



of the great American "bosses," who hoped to take advantage of the sheep-like instinct of the human race, which enabled them to draft voters together and give instructions upon which they would vote like automata, and not like human beings.

It is said that it is necessary for us to educate the electors. Are we to assume that they are ignorant? I do not assume anything of the sort. I believe that I was sent here by intelligent electors, and I applaud their intelligence. I expect to appeal to them within a comparatively brief period for a renewal of their confidence and a fresh exhibition of their intelligence. The electors are not ignorant at all. A certain percentage, perhaps, consists of people who are concerned entirely about their own interests and care very little about politics. But, if even those whose intelligence is of the very highest standard care little about politics, neglect the consideration of the interests of the nation, and do not know the names of the candidates for election that appear on the ballot-paper, it is a thousand times better that their votes should be informal than that they should be registered merely because of something that is put on the ballot-paper. It is the intelligent voter who should govern the situation, and not the illiterate voter or the voter who does not care who governs the country. This Bill contains a proposal to carry into the ballot-box something which will enable such persons to cast a mechanical vote, because a vote cast under such a system will be a mechanical vote.

Senator CRAWFORD.—The unintelligent vote is not necessarily informal.

Senator BAKHAP.—I admit that; but the honorable senator will admit that a formal vote is more likely to be an intelligent vote than is an informal vote.

The Constitution provides for a Parliament. It provides that there shall be Ministers, and that Parliament shall have powers in regard to legislation, some of which are partial and some of which are complete. But I venture to say that the Constitution will never express itself in set terms in regard to political parties or the grouping of electors. If this Parliament likes to do so, it may, but in taking such a step Parliament, in my opinion, will begin to impair substantially the very nature of the parliamentary institu-

tion. We want men here who are the result of the exercise of the electoral franchise by intelligent electors, and not by electors who are assumed to be so ignorant and so devoid of political information and interest in the affairs of the country that they require to be provided with information on the ballot-paper to enable them to cast an intelligent vote.

I know that at the back of this proposal there is some discontent arising from the advantage which it is alleged that certain candidates will procure because the initial letters of their names will place them in a certain position of priority on the ballot-paper. I think that is one of the delusions which men sometimes hug to themselves, and which have no foundation in fact. I have contested a good many elections in my time, and, although my name begins with the letter "B," I do not think that I have once secured the first position on the poll, though I have secured first position in pre-selection ballots. I believe that if my name had begun with the letter "Z" I would have been successful in any case in those contests in which I have been elected. Some people suggested in a spirit of jest that on one occasion my election was in danger because a number of Chinese made their ballot-papers informal by marking the figure 1 upside down. I escaped the danger, however, and was elected. I should be quite willing to permit the Returning Officer to draw lots to determine the position of the names of candidates on the ballot-paper if it is contended that candidates whose names beginning with the letter "A" or the letter "B" are given a marked advantage in regard to the possibility of their success. I do not believe that is so, because I know that men whose names begin with letters very low down in the alphabet have topped the poll time and again.

I understood Senator Garling to make some reference to the territorial inferiority of the State I help to represent.

Senator GARLING.—Its size.

Senator BAKHAP.—Because of its size, the honorable senator suggested that it is possible for a man to make his voice heard all over the State, but I remind him that it is not very difficult at times for Tasmanians to make their voices heard all over Australia. I do not think that a



Tasmanian, if he cared to address himself to the public of New South Wales, would fail in securing an audience as far west as Bourke. In my opinion, the electors are not so unintelligent as some persons would have us believe. It is true that we often have a considerable percentage of informal votes recorded; but, as I have said before, it is better that we should have 50 per cent. of informal votes if the informality represents unintelligence. I am not in favour of compulsory voting or compulsory enrolment. True, it is an accomplished fact, but I would prefer elections to be decided by people who are sufficiently interested in the welfare of their country to go voluntarily to the polling booth. People who have to be coaxed there in motor cars, and to whom candidates have to go down on their knees to get them to vote, are blind to their own individual and national interests.

Senator FAIRBAIRN.—A candidate would not be returned if he neglected those people.

Senator BAKHAP.—If the honorable senator's candidature were left to those people who would vote entirely of their own accord, it would be quite safe, just as my own would be safe, even if it were declared to be an offence to solicit a vote. But I do not think that the grouping proposal is a good one, even in the interests of the political organizations themselves, and they would realize it, if they could see far enough ahead. It is a two-edged sword, and it is the shadow of the machine on the ballot-paper. Any side-stepping of the issue is futile, when it takes place before an individual of average intelligence. There is going to be some difficulty in this proposal from the party point of view also. I admit that, if it becomes the law, I have no objection whatever to being grouped with the candidates with whom I have fought on the platform, election after election, but in some States the power of the machine is such that it selects only that number of candidates which is sufficient to fill the vacancies.

Senator REID.—The candidates of the machine have been returned in every instance.

Senator BAKHAP.—Not always.

Senator REID.—Yes; of late years they have.

Senator BAKHAP.—Some people regard that as a necessary evil. Machine

politics are a very modern development, and whether they are a wholesome development or not, I am not inclined to say. A certain amount of party discipline with regard to big sections of public opinion is undoubtedly necessary, and perhaps desirable, but if too strongly stressed the evils of the system become apparent.

In Tasmania the people have had a very early acquaintance with proportional representation and preferential voting. The two principles are not the same. Proportional representation has been rejected by the Senate, and I am not going to discuss it now, although I am still as strongly in favour of it as ever, because I believe that minority opinion should be proportionately represented. The party to which I subscribe allegiance, to a certain extent, has never been foolish enough, unless the electoral system required it, to practise the selection of candidates. There will be three Senate vacancies, so far as we can see, for Tasmania to fill at the next Federal election. Those of the retiring senators, who agree to stand, may do so, and if they have not committed any political sins of a serious character, or adopted an attitude which shows an abandonment of the political principles favoured by the Nationalist party, I have no doubt that their candidature will be indorsed. Indorsed, that is all. They will not be selected, if I understand the Tasmanian Nationalist party's organization aright, and ten or twenty candidates may come forward for the purpose of standing for the three vacancies. So long as they profess adherence to the Nationalist principles, their candidature will be indorsed also, and we may have twenty candidates from the Nationalist party to fill the three Senatorial seats. That may not happen in the other States, because of the intervention of the machine, but the proposal now under consideration will provide for the power of the machine to be extended right on to the ballot-paper. The actual name of the political machine in any particular State is not to be placed on the ballot-paper, but the medicine is being tried by the adoption of a letter.

Senator MACDONALD.—Are you not a member of a party?

Senator BAKHAP.—Yes; but in the first place I am a member of the Senate of the Australian Parliament, and I will not hesitate at any time to vote in a way



which I regard as in the interests of the nation, even though I may have to adopt a different course from that advocated by the Nationalist party. The very first time I went on the political platform, I stated that, if elected, I would do as I liked; and so I always will. If a proposal is put upon the platform of my party that I consider to be pernicious, is it imagined that it will receive my support? The party claims a certain amount of allegiance from me, and receives it; but I do not intend to sink my individual opinions, and support the attitude of any political party, if I consider it to be opposed to the welfare of the nation.

Senator MACDONALD.—The honorable senator belongs to the most hide-bound party in existence—the Tory party.

Senator BAKHAP.—That is only the honorable senator's personal opinion. The grouping system has, to a certain extent, been abandoned by the Labour party in Tasmania, and at the last election the selection of candidates was not made according to the number of seats to be filled, but all who cared could stand, so long as they were Labourites. It is very singular that this Government should be bringing down a proposal that has the commendation of a representative of what I have always thought was the premier political machine in Australia. We are told that the Act already on the statute-book is for the purpose of giving the poor, ignorant, and unreasoning elector additional information with regard to the candidates, of whom his knowledge will be so little as to hardly justify him in voting at all. This is to give him that additional information that will enable him to pick out from the various groups the candidates for whom he desires to vote, thus enabling him to avoid exercising his franchise informally. I think the political organizations at the back of this proposal will be surprised at the result of the first election at which it is put into operation. If there were fifteen candidates belonging to the Nationalist party grouped under a particular letter, would not an elector be in just as difficult a position in selecting from those fifteen the three for whom he wished to vote? All he would know would be that they were all of the Nationalist party. Is he going to vote for the lot? Some of the electors will. I have known a man go year after year

to record his vote, and it became evident that he always did one thing—put his ballot-papers into the box without making a mark on them. I know another case where an elector, a very intelligent person—she happened to be a lady—always refused to record her vote in any other way than by writing on the ballot-paper, "I wish to vote for Mr. So-and-so and Mr. So-and-so." If the system were altered 150 times, she would always vote in the same way.

We are not very anxious to educate the elector at all. We provide pains and penalties for those who try to do so in certain circumstances. If they come near the polling booth, they are liable to be fined. What could be more educational on the part of a political party than to leave a card in the polling booth indicative of the candidates of the organization which the party wishes to see supported; but such a procedure, although more educational than the proposal in this Bill, is against the law, because it is provided in section 165 of the existing Act that "a person shall not exhibit or leave in any polling booth any card or paper having thereon any direction or instruction as to how an elector should vote, or as to the method of voting."

Senator MACDONALD.—It is like the leading quotation of a lawyer?

Senator BAKHAP.—Does the honorable senator wish to annul section 165?

Senator BENNY.—It is an attempt to use undue influence.

Senator BAKHAP.—We are very careful that the elector should not be importuned in any way, but this importunity is always with the object of educating him. There are plenty of educators about on polling day anywhere outside of an area of 20 feet from the polling booth.

Senator GARLING.—We cannot get them in New South Wales at election time.

Senator BAKHAP.—I have seen people pushed away by the police for endeavouring to exercise an educational influence on the electors.

Senator GUTHRIE.—Did the honorable senator say educator or agitator?

Senator BAKHAP.—Agitators at times may be good educators. Let honorable senators remember how we have designedly eliminated from our Electoral Act all provisions which hampered the electors in



what I might term the cool, calm, exercise of the franchise. Why, it is hardly permissible for candidates to engage vehicles to take electors to the poll.

Senator GUTHRIE.—Or give them a beer.

Senator BAKHAP.—If they are thirsty we cannot give them a drink. We must not give them any refreshment. We must leave them alone, and must not solicit their support by any material inducement. Notwithstanding all this, it is proposed to permit this insidious method to project itself on to the ballot-paper. We are elected to serve a State, and not any party, and, surely, we are not such hypocrites as to hide from ourselves that it is the intention in regard to this proposal to use the ballot-paper for party purposes. That is the intention. Why deny it? Certainly I do not.

Senator MACDONALD.—I come here as the representative of a party.

Senator BAKHAP.—And I come here as a representative of the nation. I have received votes from all political parties. We come here to represent the ideal condition of affairs which, unfortunately, owing to numerous imperfections in our present system of legislation and government, cannot be completely realized. We represent the ideal of all for the State and none for party. I can assure honorable senators that I come here as a representative of the whole of the people. The fortunes of my political party do not deserve or receive particular consideration, but the fortune of the people of Australia as a whole.

Senator MACDONALD.—Is not the honorable senator justified in supporting the principles of his party?

Senator BAKHAP.—That interjection surely indicates the great gulf which separates us as politicians. The whole object of the legislation we have enacted is to prevent electors from being influenced or interfered with when they desire to record their votes. We are not allowed to educate the electors in the polling booth.

Senator GARLING.—Where do you find that?

Senator BAKHAP.—In section 165 of the Electoral Act, sub-section 1 of which I have just referred to. Is not that embodied in our electoral law to prevent electors being enlightened and receiving assistance in voting for the candidates whom they wish to support? Can it be said that there is nothing particularly

penal in that? There surely is. Do honorable senators forget the care that has to be exercised in connexion with electoral advertisements? They cannot be anonymous.

Senator GARLING.—Has the honorable senator read sub-section 2 of the provision he has just quoted?

Senator BAKHAP.—Yes, I have, and the honorable senator can quote it if he desires in Committee. I shall now quote section 171, which reads—

171. The following Acts are, on polling day, and on all days to which the polling is adjourned, prohibited at the entrance of or within a polling booth, or in any public or private place within twenty feet of the entrance of a polling booth, namely:—

- (a) Canvassing for votes; or
- (b) Soliciting the vote of any elector; or
- (c) Inducing any elector not to vote for any particular candidate; or
- (d) Inducing any elector not to vote at the election; or
- (e) Exhibiting any notice or sign (other than an official notice) relating to the election.

Penalty: Twenty-five pounds.

I ask honorable senators what is the intention of the people whose conduct is regarded as reprehensible under this clause? It is to educate the elector as he steps across the threshold of the booth. They do not desire to take his life, to rob or maim him, or to commit a criminal offence. They are there for the purpose of educating him in the interests of a political party. That is decreed by the law as reprehensible, and yet in face of this we find honorable senators—they may be right, but I do not think so—favouring such a foolish thing as grouping candidates, and bringing the political machine, the existence of which is tolerated rather than admired, into such close proximity to the ballot-box. I intend, even if I have not any support, to record a negative vote on this provision. I shall not have an opportunity of speaking when the measure is in Committee; but a measure which embodies such a provision deserves to be rejected *in toto*.

Senator RUSSELL (Victoria) [12.35].

—One of the objectionable features of this measure is the proposed system of grouping candidates, which, I think, the Government should reconsider before coming to a definite decision. The proposed system provides that the candidates of a political party shall be grouped on the ballot-paper to enable electors to more easily record their votes in favour



of the representatives of a particular party. The practice in the past has been that candidates submitting their names for selection must agree to sign the programme of the party, and also to stand down if not selected. I remember on one occasion being selected as the third candidate for the Senate; but Professor Nansen suggested an improved method of counting, which resulted in my name being placed seventh instead of third in a list of twenty-three candidates. Under the so-called improved system it was an average, and not a majority, vote which placed me seventh on the list; but I was elected to the Senate before the discovery was made. A little over two years ago the National party advertised for three candidates. I did not nominate, because I understood that a selection was to be made by vote; but that method was subsequently abandoned. Senator Elliott and Senator Guthrie nominated, and when I was asked why I did not submit my name, I said I had had enough of selection by vote, because the branches were "stuffed," and I would sooner be out of Parliament than submit to selection on that basis. I said that I would face the electors as a supporter of the Hughes Government, and if they wished to support me I would appreciate it; and they did so. Since that time the party has been making the same blunder as the Labour party, by asking candidates to sign the platform of the party and support the policy of that party whether they liked it or not.

Senator MACDONALD.—The honorable senator has become enlightened.

Senator RUSSELL.—I have had considerable experience since then. I was expelled from the Labour party by a clerk in the office without the executive considering my position because I was in favour of a referendum on the question of conscription. At that particular time the question of conscription was not really before the country. I told the executive of the party that as a majority in both Houses of Parliament were apparently in favour of conscription it would have general support, and that I believed that under the War Precautions Act effect could be given to such a policy. The members of the executive sent me to Cabinet with a direction to support a referendum; but within two or three days they said, "Here is your chance to oppose the referendum." How could I do it

when I was committed to vote for it? I would not have been regarded as an honorable man. The next action on the part of the executive was to notify me by letter that I was expelled from the Labour movement after twenty years' faithful service. No questions were asked. At one election I was returned with a majority of 50,000 in the metropolitan districts, and later with 68,000 votes, after there had been a decided attempt to secure our scalps by adopting bad tactics and displaying a lack of judgment. I am not prepared to sign the platform of the National party, and if at the next elections nominations are sought under present conditions, my nomination will not be forthcoming. The three candidates who are prepared to sign the platform will be selected, and under the proposed grouping system I shall be dubbed an Independent Nationalist. I am not that. I am a Nationalist, and, in consequence of ignorance on the part of certain electors, the support which I would otherwise receive may not be forthcoming.

Senator WILSON.—This is using political machinery.

Senator RUSSELL.—Yes, and it may affect me considerably. Although I have been expelled from the Labour party, I have been a unionist for twenty years, and am still a member of an industrial organization. I have been asked why I left the Trades Hall and ceased to be a member of a union; but when such questions have been put to me I have produced my book showing that I have been a financial member for over twenty years. If the names of candidates are arranged alphabetically my name will, unfortunately, be well down on the list. It is said that that does not affect me. I remember that at the time of the double dissolution we all walked out like heroes; but now we think that we were fools.

Senator GARLING.—Does the honorable senator really think that?

Senator RUSSELL.—We did not even read the Bill that was before us. Senator Gardiner and Senator Rae called for a division. They made two in the Senate, and we had to abide by the decision. The division was on the issue of preference to unionists. We would not do it again to-morrow in the same way. It ought to have been referred to a Committee, and a Conference should have been held between the two Houses. If the Nationalists select three



candidates against me at the next elections, the public will vote against me, because they want to preserve the solidarity of the party. I must vote against this proposal because it is an experiment. If Parliament was clear-cut into two parties, it would be a sounder Parliament, and I would not then object to grouping. I know a man who, at the last election, got 100 to 1 about my chances. He was the member for Fremantle (Mr. Burchell) in the House of Representatives. I could have made a fortune by backing myself at that time. After the counting had been proceeding for about three days, I calculated that I was going to win by at least 60,000 votes. There were 27,000 men and women who voted for me as No. 1, and I remained for nine weeks with only 27,000 votes to my credit. It was a ridiculous waste of time. The Labour party divided the electorates into districts. In one district they asked their supporters to vote for Barnes, in another district for Barker, and in another for Findley. Only Mr. Watt and I were here at the time, and he said, "We shall have to take this alphabetically, and place your name third on the National ticket." I replied that it would only make a difference for a day or two, and would not matter. He said, "I think it will affect you." Consequently, the order of the names was "Elliott, Guthrie, Russell." I voted for that ticket myself, but 27,000 other electors voted for me as No. 1. My own wife voted for me as No. 1. The counting went on for nine weeks, while my total of 27,000 did not alter. They were betting in the racing clubs on the result of the election. I believe I polled 99 per cent. of the votes of the soldiers, because I was in charge at the Defence Department for about eighteen months. They did not give me their political support, but I am sure that I got 99 per cent. of their votes. Most of the soldiers voted No. 1 for General Elliott, which they were entitled to do, because of his war services. He was loved by the boys, who voted for "Pompey" and not for General Elliott. The votes were counted as though there were three separate elections. I was not in the first, and I was not in the second, and the public had such a hazy conception of the position that the betting against me went up to 100 to 1.

*Senator Russell.*

I was quite satisfied that I was going to win by 60,000. The process is expensive, and a waste of time. There is an army of officers engaged on the work. As soon as the third votes had been counted, I got confidential information that I was polling 20 to 1 in the third count against any other candidate, and there were about five candidates at that time. The fact that I had won by 60,000 votes was known for weeks before the result was announced. The President of the Senate (Senator Givens) was in the same position, and I think Senator Pearce was several weeks before he knew his total vote. The votes for the three seats ought to be counted at the same time. After I had won by 68,000 in the final count, I asked the electoral officer to let me have a list of results in each of the electorates. I went to a complimentary dinner to General Birdwood at Bendigo, and the Mayor said he was glad to see me present, because I had topped the poll for Bendigo. I did not know it, and eight weeks after the election had to be told this fact by the Mayor. Such things make one feel a fool. I replied to his remarks, and got out of the difficulty as best I could. When I came to Melbourne the electoral officers stated that they could not give me the figures, and I said that I would bring the matter up in Parliament. I was proud to learn that I had won in every wheat-growing district in the State. This was because of my association with the Wheat Pools. The farmers did not vote for the Country party candidates, who lost their deposits, and I got a majority of the farmers' votes. Half the money now spent on a Senate election could be saved if the continual, useless counting was done away with. In the interests of economy, something of the sort ought to be done. The electoral officers say that they cannot do as I suggest under the preferential system, but I defy them to prove it. I hope the Government will take the matter into consideration. I cannot vote for the group system with more than two parties in Parliament, because of the position that I and some others would be placed in. I support the National party, and I am a financial member of it, but I do not want to sign the platform. I am satisfied that if I have three National opponents at the next election, and I am



placed at the bottom of the list as an Independent Nationalist, I shall lose, because 10 per cent. of the electors have discretion, and 90 per cent. of them follow the party leaders. Every party is led by eight or ten men, and what they say is accepted by the crowd, who believe in their politics, but know little or nothing of the principles on which an election is fought. Such big questions as White Australia, Protection and Free Trade are what inflame the minds of the electors. I have heard people speaking as if the Commonwealth Bank was the greatest asset we had, and as if it had £1,000,000,000 behind it. It was faith that saved Australia from a financial crisis during the war. There was no panic because there was faith and credit, which were established mostly by the reputation for honesty held by the Government and the Commonwealth Bank. I hope the Government will take into consideration the economic effect of counting the first, second, and third votes as a single vote. I know that under the group system it would be optional for me to get two others to join me as a group; but if these others were not the National selected candidates, I believe I should lose the election. I shall move definitely in Committee to give effect to my views. I shall vote against the group tickets, because I believe that such a system would do injury to the candidates.

*Sitting suspended from 1 to 2.30 p.m.*

**Senator KEATING** (Tasmania) [2.30].—I regret very much that circumstances suddenly arising prevent me addressing myself to this motion as lengthily as I otherwise would. I wish to take advantage of the few moments during which I can speak at this stage of the Bill to register my protest against provisions in the measure designed to introduce the system of group voting for this Chamber. I could understand provisions of that kind being applied to elections for this Chamber by Senate abolitionists who do not regard the Senate as a necessary part of the parliamentary machinery of the Commonwealth. I do not think that it would be possible to forge a stronger instrument for the hands of Senate abolitionists than the provision to which I refer will be if it is enacted. I shall not attempt at present to fully analyze the

provision; but it seems to me that it will be a very difficult matter to formulate any machinery by which groups are to be arranged. If an individual who offers himself to the choice of the electors wishes to associate himself with a certain group of candidates, who will not have him associated with them, what is he to do?

**Senator E. D. MILLEN.**—Will they not have as much right as he has?

**Senator KEATING.**—But the electors have rights that are over all.

**Senator E. D. MILLEN.**—Their rights will not be interfered with.

**Senator KEATING.**—They will; and it is intended that their rights shall be interfered with. That is the purpose, and will be the result, of this measure if it is passed. It seems to me that the provision to which I take exception postulates the ignorance or incompetence of the great proportion of the electors. We are to assume that they are incapable of going through a list of candidates presented to them on a ballot-paper, and deciding which of them professes opinions in which they believe. We are to assume that they need assistance to enable them to return candidates *en bloc*, wholesale, rather than in detail. I do not think that we can assume that the electors are so incompetent or so ignorant of the political views of those who may offer themselves for their choice.

**Senator BAKHAP.**—It is a terrible reflection upon us if they are.

**Senator KEATING.**—Exactly. If the electors are so incompetent and ignorant what is the value of their voice in the regulation of the country's affairs. I shall have an opportunity of addressing myself more fully to the matter at a later stage of the proceedings on the Bill. So far as the mere machinery clauses of the Bill are concerned there is a good deal to commend them; but I am very sorry that the Government should have associated these purely machinery provisions with the radical alteration in the principle of election comprised in the provision for the group system of voting.

No matter what we may say here and now in the shape of reasons for the adoption of this new principle, honorable senators may take it from me that the public will not believe us. They will not

consider that this Bill has been introduced for the benefit of the unfortunate elector who may require instruction as to how he should vote, but they will consider that it is introduced, as *primâ facie* it seems to be, for the benefit of political organizations outside. They will consider, if the measure is passed, that it is passed for the benefit of sitting members, and we can never escape the odium of criticism of that kind.

Senator WILSON.—I do not think that we should either, if we pass this provision.

Senator KEATING.—No, we should not. If we are to divide the electors of this country into two parties, we shall find that they are represented in the Senate by thirty-four on one side and by two on the other. What will be said if a Senate so constituted enacts so radical an alteration in the system by which elections are to be conducted? The system that applied at the last general election was a radical departure from the system previously existing; but that, at least, had the merit that it was carried in a Senate where the disproportion between the strength of the two political parties was nothing like as great as it is in the Senate to-day. Holding the opinions I do on this subject, I feel that I am right in warning honorable senators of the criticism which they will certainly be subjected to if the provisions of this Bill are passed.

Senator MACDONALD.—Did the Labour party in 1919 oppose the group system? I do not think that they did.

Senator KEATING.—I have not looked through the division lists, and I do not know whether they did or not; but I say that what is proposed in this Bill is such a radical departure from anything that has previously existed in the Commonwealth or in the States that a Senate constituted as this is should be very hesitant, especially just before an election, about enacting such a principle.

Senator SENIOR (South Australia) [2.35].—In considering the Bill, undoubtedly the first principle that strikes one is that which has been discussed by Senator Keating. Listening to some of the criticism we have heard to-day, one would think that there is nothing to recommend it, and that the practical results in ordinary elections do not point

in any way to the necessity for the adoption of such a system as is proposed. Scrutineers who have gone through hundreds of thousands of ballot-papers will tell us that a very large number of votes are cast in the order in which the names of candidates appear on the ballot-paper, beginning at the first. That surely indicates that, speaking generally, the elector has some difficulty in selecting from the multitude of names of candidates those for whom he desires to vote. Whatever may be said to the contrary, we do now group ourselves together as party men or as men entertaining certain political opinions.

Senator MACDONALD. — By the measures we advocate.

Senator SENIOR.—Senator MacDonald stands as a representative of the Labour party, and we on this side stand as representatives of the National party. Another honorable senator may stand as a representative of the Country party. How, therefore, can it be argued that we should not on the ballot-paper facilitate the marking of the paper by electors in accordance with the views of the political group to which they belong. The argument has been that we must be wedded to the old system, but I contend that if it was found necessary in times past to make a change from what was known as the block vote system and substitute for it the preferential vote, it may now be argued with equal force that it is necessary at the present time to group together candidates who stand on a common political ground. It has been said that we postulate the ignorance of the elector, but one has only to come in contact with the electors to find that, whilst they are clear as to their desire to vote for a certain party, they find it difficult, especially where names are somewhat similar, to pick out on a ballot-paper the names of the candidates for whom they desire to cast their votes. There can be nothing wrong in so preparing the ballot-paper as to enable the elector to more easily vote as he wishes to do. It has been suggested that under this Bill it is proposed to project the party system on to the ballot-paper. I deny that, because selection as to who shall be included in a particular group will rest with the candidates themselves. The Bill



provides that if, for instance, six candidates have a common political ground each can apply to be included in the same political group. Will any honorable senator contend that they should not be permitted to do so? I say that the three first applying to be included in a group have no right to say that a fourth candidate shall not be admitted to that group.

Senator WILSON.—If the honorable senator happens to be the fourth candidate for a particular group in the State which he represents he will find that he will be kept out.

Senator SENIOR.—I do not wish to discuss the matter from that point of view. The difficulty suggested by the honorable senator is, perhaps, more likely to occur in New South Wales than in South Australia. I make my deductions entirely from the Bill as it appears before us. In my opinion, every candidate holding certain opinions is entitled in all fairness to be included in the group of candidates professing those opinions.

Senator ELLIOTT.—There is nothing in the Bill to provide for any agreement as to party groups.

Senator SENIOR.—There is no provision in the Bill to prevent such an agreement. Some honorable senators are obsessed with the idea that the Bill will cast the shadow of the party system on to the ballot-papers. It leaves it open to all who are of the same opinion to be included in one group.

Senator FAIRBAIRN.—Unless some object to the inclusion of others.

Senator SENIOR.—That may be a matter for consideration in Committee.

Senator WILSON.—I fail to follow the honorable senator. If any candidate is to be permitted to have his name included in a group, it will not be a group from a party point of view.

Senator SENIOR.—I did not say that it would, but my honorable friend has insisted that the proposal is to group candidates for party purposes. If he holds at the next election the same opinions as those which he held three years ago, he will have a right to be included in any group of candidates holding similar opinions. Group voting is not necessarily indorsed by the provisions

of this Bill at all, because the elector will have the right to select or reject any candidate included in the group.

Senator WILSON.—Does the honorable senator not think that a group should be limited to the number required to be elected?

Senator SENIOR.—The Bill does not limit a group in that way or provide any machinery for that purpose.

Senator ELLIOTT.—It might be so prescribed.

Senator SENIOR. — The honorable senator has directed attention to a danger that arises from our method of legislation, much of which is not done in Parliament, but by prescription or regulation. This is a matter which should not be left to officials to prescribe. We should say what we mean concerning it here and now while the Electoral Bill is before us.

I do not consider that an elector's vote is inherent in his property, but I agree with those who say that the vote belongs to his manhood. If an elector happens to be away from home, he should not exercise the franchise in any other interests than those of the district where he lives and is enrolled. The Bill does not suggest taking away from him the power to vote, but it does seek to prevent a man from interfering with the election in another division. We make enrolment compulsory, and an elector should recognise that, having placed his name on a roll in a given locality, he has indicated that that is where he desires his influence to be felt. A man who resides in a southern portion of Australia, and who goes north for a few months, should not be permitted to take part in an election away from his home district, but he should exercise the franchise as an absent voter.

I do not favour the numbering of the ballot-paper. For many years we struggled for the secrecy of the ballot, and anything calculated to undermine that secrecy is undesirable. Otherwise, the Bill is purely of a machinery nature, and greater attention can be centred upon it when it reaches the Committee stage.

Senator WILSON (South Australia) [2.40].—As far as possible we should keep the question of government by party out of the deliberations of the Senate. I understood that this was to be a States House, but here we find legislation suggested by the Government that would

very largely impoverish the rights of the Senate. The grouping system as proposed in the Bill would greatly encourage block voting, and I do not consider that to be advantageous. Unfortunately for the public life of Australia the personality of the candidate does not count in an election as much as one might desire. The standard attained by public men has not improved in the last few years, because the average citizen is not prepared to lend himself to the party manœuvring that is necessary to enable him to get into public life.

Senator EARLE.—Is party manœuvring a new thing?

Senator WILSON.—It has been a growth in various parties, and in the different States. Senator Keating has very wisely put it that this proposal would provide ammunition for those who believe in the abolition of the Senate.

Senator E. D. MILLEN.—A very extravagant statement!

Senator WILSON.—We should preserve the Senate as a States House, and legislation of this description will not help in that direction. When three South Australian senators retire next year the other two may say that they do not want me in their block. They may tell me to line up and enter a secret room, and sign a certain policy that may not suit me personally.

Senator DRAKE-BROCKMAN.—That applies only to the Labour and Country parties.

Senator WILSON.—The honorable senator is quite wrong in assuming that the parties other than the Nationalist party have a monopoly of pledges. One of the most useful men ever seen in this Chamber—Sir Josiah Symon—went out of public life because of that very principle. He stated in his speech in the Adelaide Town Hall that if he were to be compelled to sign a pledge to a few people he would sooner go out of public life altogether.

Senator E. D. MILLEN.—What was the answer of the electors?

Senator WILSON.—Party politics, unfortunately for Australia, lost the services of a very able man.

Senator E. D. MILLEN.—He decided to run as a free lance, and the electors said they wished to know definitely where he stood.

Senator WILSON.—The electors knew the principles he advocated. My name is very low on the alphabetical list, but the electors found their way down to me.

Senator GARLING.—Your electors are in the Capital city, where the newspapers get them.

Senator WILSON.—That is quite wrong. Is it contended that the electors of New South Wales are not intelligent enough to follow the names of candidates in their alphabetical order?

Senator E. D. MILLEN.—There has been no question as to the intelligence of the electors, but as to the information furnished to them.

Senator WILSON.—I maintain that the average elector is quite capable of going through a list of names and picking out the men for whom he desires to vote; if not, he is incapable of casting an intelligent vote. Reference was made by Senator Macdonald to the possibility of an elector, who had had too much to drink, requiring some assistance in voting.

Senator MACDONALD.—Why pick out merely the "drunk"? I referred to the short-sighted, the aged, and the infirm as well.

Senator WILSON.—The Bill can best be dealt with in detail in Committee. I cannot agree with the grouping system, and unless the Minister for Repatriation (Senator E. D. Millen), who appears to think that it has much to commend it, can bring forward a tremendous weight of evidence to show that it is an improvement, the proposal will not have my support.

Senator VARDON (South Australia) [3.1].—Undoubtedly the principal discussion on this measure will be on the proposed grouping of party candidates on the ballot-paper; but the party system is with us, and I do not see how we can eliminate it. The people of Australia regret that the Senate has become as much a party House as the other branch of the Legislature, but that has been brought about by the franchise under which honorable senators are elected. It would be preferable to introduce a system of proportional representation for this Chamber which would result in all sections of the community being represented. During the 1913 elections, approximately 51 per cent. of the votes cast were in favour of



the Labour party, and, approximately, 49 per cent. in favour of Liberals, and although there was a difference of only 2 per cent. in favour of the Labour party that party received 85 per cent. of the representation. At the last Federal elections only one Labour member was returned to this Chamber, and it has been stated by some that that gentleman found his way here owing to an accident. Under a system of proportional representation for the Senate better results would be achieved, and the electors would have more adequate representation than at present. I have had a fair amount of experience in connexion with elections, and I believe the grouping provision will not be found to be unfair to individuals or parties. It does not emphasize the party system more than it is emphasized at present, and it will, I think, simplify voting.

Senator GARLING. — With a cipher against the name?

Senator VARDON.—The electors can be informed that their candidates will be found in group A, B, or C, as the case may be.

Senator WILSON.—Fifty per cent. of the electors do not belong to any organization.

Senator E. D. MILLEN.—And that section is most bitter in its complaints concerning organizations.

Senator VARDON.—Senator Wilson may be correct; but a great majority of the people support some organization. With one or two exceptions, independent candidates have failed to secure a seat in Parliament; and much as we deplore the party system, it is here, and we must make the best of it. The grouping system would not only assist the electors, but would be of benefit when the scrutiny is being conducted. I support the Bill.

Debate (on motion by Senator DE LARGIE) adjourned.

## PAPERS.

The following papers were presented:—

Arbitration (Public Service) Act—Determinations by the Arbitrator, &c.—No. 13 of 1922—Commonwealth Public Service Clerical Association.

Lands Acquisition Act—Land acquired for Postal purposes in Queensland at—Nobby; Yeronga.

## NATIONALITY BILL.

### SECOND READING.

Senator PEARCE (Western Australia—Minister for Home and Territories) [3.7].—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

This measure is being introduced owing to some slight disability which rests upon persons resident in our Territories in respect to naturalization. It extends the provision of the Commonwealth Nationality Act 1920 to the Territories of Papua and Norfolk Island, and to any Territory brought under the authority of the Commonwealth by a proclamation of the Governor-General. As regards Papua and Norfolk Island, the Commonwealth has adopted Part II. of the British Nationality and Status of Aliens Act of 1914, and for the purposes of that Act the Commonwealth of Australia is deemed to include the two Territories mentioned, as shown by the second schedule of the Nationality Act 1920. There is already an Ordinance in force in Papua, entitled the Aliens Ordinance 1911, which empowers the Lieutenant-Governor to grant certificates of naturalization, but naturalization granted under that is local only. The Ordinance has to be repealed by the Legislative Council of Papua; but the repeal of that Ordinance will not take effect until the provisions of this Bill become law. There must not be any hiatus, and the rights of persons naturalized under that Ordinance would be safeguarded in this measure.

There is no law in force in Norfolk Island at present, under which naturalization can be granted to an alien, and considerable hardship is being experienced in one particular instance by a very worthy and deserving resident on the island, who is suffering disability because he cannot obtain naturalization. This measure will overcome that difficulty.

Clause 7 contains an amendment to section 12 of the principal Act, and substitutes "Minister" for "Governor-General." The object of this amendment is to obviate the necessity of notices under the section being issued by the Governor-General in Council, which is an unusual procedure. Another amendment is to remove any inconsistency in the provisions of the Act relating to the revocation of

certificates of naturalization, and to make it clear that the Governor-General may revoke a certificate granted under a State Act or an Ordinance of a Territory.

Senator DRAKE-BROCKMAN.—What is the position in regard to the Mandated Territories?

Senator PEARCE.—I hardly think we have authority to grant naturalization in Mandated Territories, where our rights are not sovereign. At any rate, this measure does not affect those Territories.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee:*

Clause 1 agreed to.

Progress reported.

## PRESENTATION OF ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Senator E. D. MILLEN (New South Wales — Minister for Repatriation) [3.11].—I desire to inform you, Mr. President, and honorable senators, that a communication has been received from His Excellency the Governor-General, stating that he is now on an official visit to the Northern Rivers District and Queensland, and it will not be possible for him to receive the Address-in-Reply from the Senate until his return to Melbourne in September. His Excellency suggests, therefore, that the presentation of the Address-in-Reply be deferred until then.

Senate adjourned at 3.12 p.m.

## House of Representatives.

*Friday, 23 July, 1922.*

MR. SPEAKER (Hon. Sir Elliot Johnson) took the chair at 11 a.m., and read prayers.

### SUPPLY OF CARBIDE.

Mr. HIGGS.—I desire to ask the Minister for Trade and Customs a question having reference to the supply of carbide. We have virtually given Tasmania a monopoly of the manufacture of this commodity, but carbide is practically unpurchasable in Central Queensland. Will the honorable gentleman obtain some relief for consumers there?

Mr. RODGERS.—The Tasmanian undertaking has duplicated its plant in order that it may be able to provide the full requirements of the Commonwealth. At the present time, however, there is a shortage, and permission is being given to import the quantity necessary to make good the deficiency.

Mr. PROWSE.—In view of the fact that the price of carbide in Western Australia is now £50 or more per ton, I desire to ask the Minister for Trade and Customs, to whom the consent of the Department is being given to import the quantity necessary to make up the shortage in the supply for local requirements, and under what conditions the importations are to be made?

Mr. RODGERS.—The requirements in each State are being ascertained. The permission to import will be on such lines as will make provision for the immediate requirements of each State through the ordinary trading channels.

### UNEMPLOYMENT.

#### PROPOSED GRANT FOR PUBLIC WORKS.

Mr. PRATTEN.—In answer to the Leader of the Opposition, the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) stated yesterday that the Commonwealth Government had decided to grant to the States a sum of £250,000 for the making of roads and highways in order to give relief to the unemployed. I desire to ask the Treasurer whether that or any amount has been appropriated by Parliament for the purpose, and if not, out of what account the money will be paid?

Mr. BRUCE.—No sum has yet been appropriated for the purpose. If it is to come out of any fund it will be paid out of loan funds, as and when the matter comes up for consideration.

### COMMONWEALTH WOOLLEN MILLS.

Mr. SCULLIN.—Seeing that the annual balance-sheet of the Commonwealth Woollen Mills, Geelong, was duly audited on 16th March last, I desire to ask the Minister for Defence why it has been withheld from honorable members for over four months?

Mr. GREENE.—Such balance-sheets have been tabled as soon as the Auditor-General's certificate has been given.



# PAPUAN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

## REPRESENTATION OF NATIVES.

Mr. HIGGS asked the Prime Minister, *upon notice*—

1. Whether he is in a position to make a statement of the intentions of the Government with regard to more direct representation of Papuan aboriginal natives in the Legislative Council of Papua?

2. What is—

- (a) the estimated number of aboriginal natives living in Papua;
- (b) the estimated number of white residents in Papua?

3. What are the names of the members of the Legislative Council of Papua and the method of their appointment?

Mr. HUGHES.—The answers to the honorable member's question are as follows:—

1. No. The matter is under consideration.

2. (a) There is no very accurate means of estimating the native population, but the number is usually stated to be between 250,000 and 275,000.

(b) At the census of 4th April, 1921, the number of white residents was 1,343. So far as the Commonwealth Government is aware, the Papuan Government has not made any estimate of the number of residents since.

3. The Legislative Council consists of the Lieutenant-Governor, of the members of the Executive Council (who are officers of the Territory and are appointed to that Council by the Governor-General), and of non-official members appointed by the Governor-General or by the Lieutenant-Governor, acting under instructions from the Governor-General. The names are Judge Murray, and Messrs. Smith, Champion, Bramwell, Kendrick, Dr. Strong, Messrs. Williamson, Nelsson, and Whitten.

## CITIZEN INCOMES.

### PUBLICATION OF DETAILS.

Mr. FENTON (for Dr. MALONEY) asked the Treasurer, *upon notice*—

1. Is it a fact that the salaries of the King and Royal Family, every soldier of note, and even of the private, every sailor of high renown, and even to that of the humblest sailor lad, every Commonwealth and State public servant, the Prime Minister, Premiers, Ministers, and members of the Commonwealth and the six State Parliaments, the only Chief Justice of a continent, all Judges of the High, Supreme, and County Courts, and of all Stipendiary Magistrates are known and published?

2. With a view to the apportioning of just taxation on those best able to bear it, will the Treasurer bring before the Cabinet the urgent necessity of publishing the net incomes of all citizens receiving over £500 per annum?

Mr. BRUCE.—The answers to the honorable member's questions are as follows:—

1. Yes.

2. No. There are very many objections to such a course.

## SHIPMENT OF FRUIT BY HOBSON'S BAY.

Dr. EARLE PAGE asked the Minister for Trade and Customs, *upon notice*—

What were (1) the freights received, and (2) the costs incurred in carrying the fruit cargo of the Commonwealth steamer *Hobson's Bay* to England?

Mr. RODGERS.—The information is being obtained.

## FEDERAL CAPITAL BUILDINGS.

Mr. FOWLER asked the Minister for Works and Railways, *upon notice*—

1. In view of the considerable expenditure on buildings proposed in connexion with the Federal Capital, is it the intention to invite the assistance of the Australian Institute of Architects?

2. If not, why not?

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—The matter is now under consideration.

## REGULATION OF WIRELESS.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY asked the Prime Minister, *upon notice*—

1. Whether it is the intention of the Government to regulate the use of wireless by experimenters and amateurs?

2. Will the Government see that restrictions other than those necessary to protect the wireless stations from interference are not placed on experimenters and amateurs, and that facilities equal to those granted to such people in other countries are given in Australia?

3. Is it his intention to compel such experimenters and amateurs to have their applications containing their ideas sent to the Wireless Company to be approved?

4. Will he see that the Wireless Company does not interfere in the enforcing of the wireless laws, and that those laws are enforced by Government officials, so that there will be Government control by disinterested officials to guarantee the proper working of the company's stations and the unrestricted working by amateurs?

Mr. HUGHES.—The answers to the honorable member's questions are as follows:—

1. Yes.

2. Yes.

3. No.

4. Yes; the administration of the Wireless Telegraphy Act and Regulations is being carried out by Government officers only.

## WAR SERVICE HOMES COMMISSION.

### OFFER TO PURCHASE QUEENSLAND TIMBER AREAS.

Mr. MACKAY asked the Minister representing the Minister for Repatriation, *upon notice*—

Has the Queensland Government made an offer to purchase the timber areas or milling plants held by the War Service Homes Commission in Queensland?

Mr. HECTOR LAMOND.—No. The Queensland Government has, however, intimated that it is willing to purchase a small portion of the freehold areas.

### INCOME TAX OFFICE, SYDNEY: RENT.

Mr. BRUCE.—On the 19th July the honorable member for Maribyrnong (Mr. Fenton) asked the following question:—

Will the Treasurer make inquiries as to the rent paid to the *Sydney Morning Herald* Proprietary for the income tax office in Sydney, and ascertain whether or not it is in excess?

I then promised to have inquiries made. The Home and Territories Department have now furnished the following information:—

The accommodation in Warwick Chambers, Sydney, occupied by the Taxation Branch, consists of the first, second, fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth floors, containing office space of approximately 38,252 square feet, at a rental of £6,000 per annum, which works out at about 3s. 1d. per square foot per annum. The rental is not excessive, but below the average paid for office accommodation in Sydney. These premises are leased from the 1st October, 1920, to the 30th September, 1923.

## RABBIT SKINS.

Mr. RODGERS.—On the 12th instant the honorable member for Gwydir (Mr. Cunningham) addressed to me a question as to the quantity and value of rabbit skins exported during the last two years, as well as the quantity used in Australia during the same period. I then promised to obtain for him the desired information. The answer is that the exports were as follows:—

| Year.   |     | Quantity.<br>Lbs. | Value.<br>£ |
|---------|-----|-------------------|-------------|
| 1920-21 | ... | 5,557,160         | 975,911     |
| 1921-22 | ... | 8,334,519         | 787,829     |
| Total   | ... | 13,891,679        | 1,763,740   |

I regret that no reliable information can be obtained regarding the quantity of rabbit skins used each year in Australia.

## ELECTORAL DIVISIONS.

### REDISTRIBUTION OF VICTORIA.

Mr. GROOM (Darling Downs—Attorney-General) [11.11].—I move—

That the House of Representatives approves of the distribution of the State of Victoria into electoral divisions as proposed by Messrs. R. C. Oldham, A. B. Lang, and R. H. Lawson, the Distribution Commissioners for the purpose of distributing the said State into divisions, in their report laid before Parliament on the 29th day of June, 1922, and that the names of the divisions suggested in the report and indicated on the map referred to therein be adopted, and that the name of the new division be "Deakin."

I am sure that honorable members will appreciate the proposal to give the name of "Deakin" to the new Victorian electorate. If any man ever deserved the thanks of not merely this State, but the whole Commonwealth, it is the honoured statesman whose name is incorporated in this motion.

The motion invites the House to approve of the report which has been presented by the Electoral Commissioners for the redistribution of Victoria. The Commissioners have made their inquiries in accordance with the directions given to them as required by the law. They report that they were informed that their duty was to divide the State into twenty electoral divisions in lieu of the twenty-one divisions now existing, and that, pursuant to the requirements of section 18 of the Commonwealth Electoral Act, the quota of the State has been ascertained to be 42,789. The redistribution of the State is necessary, owing to the change in population, which, according to the certificate of the Chief Electoral Officer, involves a reduction in the representation of Victoria in this House from twenty-one to twenty members. That certificate has been given as provided for by the Representation Act, and under that Act and the Electoral Act the change which it declares to be necessary becomes mandatory at the next general election following its issue. I do not want to weary the House by repeating the statistical information which I furnished previously on the motion for the redistribution of the State of New South Wales. I need only say that the last census showed an increase of 27.51 per cent. in the population of New South Wales during the last decade, a percentage increase of 16.41 in the population of Victoria, 25.75 in the population of Queensland, 21.24



in the population of South Australia, 19.52 in the population of Western Australia, and 11.85 in the population of Tasmania. Working upon the statistical information so obtained, the Chief Electoral Officer found it was necessary to certify that there should be only twenty representatives of the State of Victoria in this House. It, therefore, became the duty of the Distribution Commissioners to re-adjust the whole State, and to make a complete redistribution upon that basis. They report that in carrying out this work they have had regard to the conditions imposed by the Electoral Act, that due consideration shall be given to community or diversity of interest, means of communication, physical features, and existing boundaries of divisions and subdivisions and State electoral boundaries. At the distribution in 1912 the metropolitan area in the State of Victoria contained 349,902 electors, distributed among ten divisions, with an average electoral quota of 34,990. In the extra-metropolitan area there were 377,699 electors in eleven divisions, with an average electoral quota of 34,336. During the ten years since 1912 the electoral population of the metropolitan area has increased to 472,417, the increase being 35 per cent. In the same period the number of electors in the extra-metropolitan area has increased to 383,367, an increase of only  $1\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. The Distribution Commissioners provided for eleven metropolitan divisions, with an average quota of 42,947, and nine extra metropolitan divisions, with an average of 42,596. To these proposals objections were lodged by various bodies, and those the Commissioners have reported upon. One suggestion made to them was that they should endeavour to have a distribution which would allow the full benefit of the one-fifth margin of allowance to country areas. As to this suggestion the Commissioners report—

In framing our proposals we decided that in dividing the State into twenty divisions we could not properly include more than nine divisions in the extra-metropolitan area, and that, having regard to the distribution of electoral population and the geographical and other conditions governing redistribution in that area, the divisions of Wimmera, Echuca, Wannon, Corio, Ballarat, Bendigo, Gippsland, Indi, and Flinders should be retained with additions and modifications. This necessarily involved the disappearance of the divisions of Corangamite and the Grampians.

We are of opinion that the Electoral Act does not permit of effect being given to the suggestion of the Australian National Women's League, "That country electorates should have the full benefit of the margin of allowance below the quota prescribed by the Act," and desire to point out that even if such a course of action were not precluded by the terms of section 19 of the Act, its adoption could not be justified in view of the provisions of paragraph b of sub-section (2) of section 25 of the Act.

Those provisions are as follow:—

(1) A redistribution of any State into divisions shall be made in the manner hereinafter provided whenever directed by the Governor-General by proclamation.

(2) Such proclamation may be made—

(b) which when in one-fourth of the divisions of the State the number of the electors differs from a quota ascertained in the manner provided in this part to a greater extent than one-fifth more or one-fifth less.

If the suggestion made to the Commissioners had been adopted it is quite evident that very soon there would be need for further distribution, owing to fluctuations of population. The duty of the Commissioners was to carry out what has been regarded as the permanent law of the Commonwealth since 1902.

Mr. STEWART.—But it is not necessarily the permanent law.

Mr. GROOM.—The Act was amended in several respects in 1909 and again in 1918, but this provision has remained unaltered. The Chief Electoral Officer, referring to the decrease of population in the extra-metropolitan area, says—

A cause which has contributed largely to the loss of extra-metropolitan representatives is the decadence of the mining industry. To this cause may be attributed the decrease of the number of electors in Ballarat 3,137, Bendigo 4,907, Grampians 5,939, and Indi 2,913, during the last ten years.

The effect of the distribution is to merge Grampians and Corangamite into adjacent divisions, to make necessary adjustments in the metropolitan divisions, and to create a new metropolitan division, to which the name of Deakin is to be given. The distribution has been carried out by an independent body constituted by Parliament, which has endeavoured to carry out its duties in an impartial way in accordance with the law.

Mr. STEWART.—Why do the Government make the Commissioners' recommendations a party matter?

Mr. GROOM.—The Government have not done so.

Mr. STEWART.—They did so last night.

Mr. GROOM.—The Government have certainly not made the Commissioners' recommendations a party matter, but I ask the honorable member to say that his party's amendment last night was not intended for party purposes.

Mr. STEWART.—There were merits in our amendment.

Mr. GROOM.—Can the honorable member, in his own conscience, say that he had no party motive in originating and supporting that amendment? I am imputing nothing; I am merely asking the honorable member a question.

Mr. GIBSON (Corangamite) [11.28].

—I move—

That all the words after "That" be omitted with a view to insert the following in lieu thereof:—"this House disapproves of the distribution of the State of Victoria into electoral divisions as proposed by the Distribution Commissioners and requests the Minister to direct the Distribution Commissioners to propose a fresh distribution of the said State into divisions having better regard for community or diversity of interest up to the margin of allowance provided for in section 19 of the Commonwealth Electoral Act."

I am very much astonished at the attitude taken up by the Government in regard to the Commissioners' proposals for the distribution of electorates in Victoria. I introduced to two Ministers a large deputation representing seventy-one municipalities, which asked that this matter should not be treated as a party question, but last night, when the House was about to come to a vote on the amendment submitted by my Leader (Dr. Earle Page), it was made an absolutely party question, and members on the Ministerial side of the House were not permitted to vote according to their own convictions.

Mr. GROOM.—I like that. Did not the whole of the honorable member's party vote for their own amendment?

Mr. GIBSON.—That does not affect the question.

Mr. GROOM.—Of course not, but apparently you can make it a party question.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I ask honorable members to refrain from interjections.

Mr. GIBSON.—The Government's attitude is a breach of faith, and is contrary to the promise made to the deputation to which I have referred. Possibly the Government see in this distribution

an opportunity for keeping themselves in power. The Country party's attitude is to have justice done to country districts. All the municipalities whose representatives waited on the Minister were absolutely opposed to the distribution as propounded by the Commissioners. As the honorable member for Cowper (Dr. Earle Page) pointed out last night, the Commissioners' proposals will practically disfranchise 60,000 people in Victoria, enough electors to constitute one-and-a-half electoral divisions. Country districts of Victoria are to lose two seats in this House, while Sydney and Melbourne each gain one seat. The census of 1921 was taken just after Easter, when a great number of Victorians were visiting Sydney. We require only 10,682 more people in Victoria to bring about the position which we ask for; that is to say, a total of seventy-six members in this House. Had those numbers been in Victoria at the time of the census, this State would have had its twenty-one members, and there would have been seventy-six representatives. If, as has just been suggested in an interjection by the Honorary Minister (Sir Granville Ryrie), the census had been taken during Melbourne Cup or Show week, it is absolutely certain that Victoria would have had twenty-one representatives.

Mr. STEWART.—Probably twenty-two.

Mr. GIBSON.—The country is absolutely dissatisfied with the redistribution proposals. Their effect will be that we shall have only six Victorian country seats. The great body of primary producers will be delivered practically into the hands of representatives of the Victorian cities; and, with the latest addition, when the great towns of Colac and Camperdown shall have been absorbed in the city of Geelong, the position will be still worse. I understand, by the way, that the honorable member for Corio (Mr. Lister) proposes to move an amendment for the renaming of his constituency, so that the old country name will be wiped out and the name of the city of Geelong will be thrown over the whole of the absorbed towns and districts. My own opinion is that the redistribution in Victoria has been made on a wrong basis. The western side of the State has been cut into two electorates, namely, Wannon and Wimmera; and, instead of the city electorates possessing the greatest



totals of electors, the altered constituency of Wannon will be the largest numerically. Had the redistribution been made east and west instead of north and south, the position would have been very different. Instead of the city of Geelong absorbing two of the finest dairying districts in Victoria, the alteration, if it had been made east and west, would have kept together the community of interests to be found in such places as Colac, Terang, Camperdown, and Warrnambool, and the second electorate would have comprised the wheat and wool areas. The Commissioners might have taken some notice of section 19, to which I have already referred, and which reads—

... and subject thereto the quota of electors shall be the basis for the distribution, and the Distribution Commissioners may adopt a margin of allowance to be used whenever necessary, but in no case shall the quota be departed from to a greater extent than one-fifth more or one-fifth less.

Had that been exercised to the extent of only 10 per cent., one country constituency would have been saved to Victoria. But the Commissioners did not exercise that provision. They have actually proposed to place one of the country constituencies in the unenviable position of embracing the largest total of electors. One member of the House of Representatives has to travel 4,000 or 5,000 miles to go round his electorate. Another can "cover" the whole of his constituency by the expenditure of two-pence on a tram fare.

I trust that this matter will not be regarded as a party question, and that the Government will release their own supporters in that direction. The promise that such would be the case was definitely given by two members of the Ministry; but, last night, the whip was cracked and members who support the Government had to come into line. Some of them actually voted against their own convictions.

**Mr. STEWART (Wimmera)** [11.35].—In seconding the amendment I desire to touch on one or two phases which have not been given sufficient emphasis. The Attorney-General (Mr. Groom) last night presented a mass of figures and uttered many specious legal and constitutional arguments in an endeavour to prove—which he did, apparently to his own satisfaction—that the amendment moved by the honorable member for Cowper

(Dr. Earle Page) was unconstitutional. But the combined effect of the redistribution proposals covering Victoria and New South Wales will be to wipe out three country constituencies, namely, Grampians, Corangamite and Barrier. It is significant that those three constituencies are to be converted into three purely city electorates. One of Victoria's country constituencies will be replaced by the new Melbourne suburban constituency of Deakin. The other lost Victorian country electorate will, in effect, constitute the gift of a new Sydney suburban electorate; while the country seat proposed to be eliminated in New South Wales will be replaced by another Sydney seat. The effect will be that three rural representatives will disappear from the National Parliament and three more city members will enter this Chamber; and, more strikingly than ever, the representatives of Australian capital city electors will be in control of the Legislature. One hears a great deal nowadays about the evils of centralization. It is regrettable and astonishing that in a purely primary producing country such as Australia there should be the greatest proportionate city centralization known in any country in the world—by far the greatest. If the avocations of our people were such that rural industries were unprofitable and were decaying while city industries were prospering, one could understand the drift of population to the cities and could appreciate the necessity for readjustments of electoral boundaries. But, so far from the rural industries being in a condition of decay, they are the mainstay of Australia. If the exports of our primary products were stopped the Commonwealth would be bankrupt in a month. Rural industries are our mainstay; yet the rural population is decreasing, while city populations are increasing. The cause of the drift from country to city is simple, and may be simply explained. It lies in the fact that national legislation has rendered conditions of life more profitable and pleasant for city residents. That is the natural outcome of the preponderance of city representatives in the National Parliament. Now, however, there are to be still more city electorates and city representatives. Members of every party in this Chamber have repeatedly declared that, in the best interests

of Australia, there should be greater rural development. There is much talk of bringing out many thousands of immigrants and placing them on the land, where our native population has declined to remain.

The action of the Government in making the redistribution motions a party matter—as was witnessed last evening, and as will continue throughout the discussion—will cause the greatest resentment in country districts. The Government have acted as they have done because the proposed redistribution, not only in Victoria, but in every State, suits them nicely. I do not doubt that if the Commissioners' proposals would have the effect of wiping out two seats in this State which are held by supporters of the Government the adoption of the redistribution schemes would not be regarded by the Government as a party measure at all. Indeed, the individual members of the Ministry would assist to reject the proposals and return them to the Commissioners.

The people in the electorates proposed to be eliminated strongly resent the redistribution; and it is due to those electors that the Government should give fair and earnest consideration to the amendment of the honorable member for Corangamite. The Government proposal decreases rural representation which, in view of the need for national development, should receive the greatest consideration. If the present scheme were rejected the Commissioners could bring forward a revised scheme, which would at least retain one of these two seats. I think I am expressing the opinion of a great many, if not the majority of the residents of Melbourne, when I say that this whittling down of country representation is not in the best interests of the Commonwealth. I believe the great majority of the people of Melbourne are as strongly against the proposal as the country members are.

Mr. FENTON.—Even the Women's National League.

Mr. STEWART.—Even the Women's National League, as the honorable member for Maribyrnong reminds me. As one who has had occasion to criticise the Australian Women's National League with regard to other matters I feel that, on this particular subject, they should receive full

credit for having taken a broad national view of a most important question. The amendment submitted by the honorable member for Corangamite will, I believe, commend itself to honorable members as a constitutional proposal within the limits of the Electoral Act, and I make an appeal to members of all parties, whether representing city or country divisions, to meet the wishes of the rural electors of Victoria and support it.

Mr. GROOM (Darling Downs—Attorney-General) [11.49].—It is a very cheap suggestion of the honorable member who submitted the amendment (Mr. Gibson) that the Government have made this a party question. One has only to consider the reasons for the amendments originally suggested to understand the object in view. Honorable members of the Country party studied the electoral maps, and saw how they would be affected by the allocation of members under the Representation Act and the redistribution scheme, which, I remind the House, has been submitted by perfectly independent officers, uncontrolled by the Government or any other authority. They find that they will lose two seats in one State, and immediately they submit proposals which, if carried, would obviate that disaster. At the same time they charge the Government with being animated by party interests, merely for standing by the law as it has been enforced for the last twenty years. Can the honorable member for Corangamite pretend he was justified in asserting that the Government has made this a party question?

Mr. GIBSON.—I am perfectly justified in saying that it was understood that this was not to be a party question.

Mr. GROOM.—But the honorable member charges the Government with making it a party question, notwithstanding that their amendments originated out of a party meeting, and have been launched for party purposes. Every member of the Country party is voting for them.

Mr. PROWSE.—That is not correct.

Mr. GROOM.—Can the honorable member for Swan point to one member who has voted against them?

Mr. PROWSE.—Find out.

Mr. GROOM.—Very well, I have the list here, and I find that those who supported the amendment last night included



Mr. Robert Cook, Mr. Fleming, Mr. Gibson, Mr. Hill, Dr. Earle Page, and Mr. Stewart. I cannot find the name of one member of the Country party on the other side in the division list.

Mr. PROWSE.—I still say that the Minister's statement is not correct. All the members of the Country party are not there.

Mr. GROOM.—Does the honorable member mean that they were paired?

Mr. PROWSE.—No.

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. Sir Elliot Johnson).—Order!

Mr. GROOM.—Every member of the Country party voted or paired for the amendment yesterday.

Mr. McGRATH.—That is not so.

Mr. GROOM.—The honorable member for Ballarat has properly reminded me that Mr. Hunter's name is not in the list, and accordingly, to that extent, I withdraw my statement. But all honorable members know that members of the Country party are supporting these amendments most determinedly.

Dr. EARLE PAGE.—On broad, national grounds.

Mr. GROOM.—Why all this hypocrisy about "broad national grounds"?

Mr. SPEAKER.—Order! I remind the House that it is grossly disorderly, when the Speaker has once called for order, for an honorable member to interject immediately afterwards. The business of the House cannot be carried on properly under such conditions, and I appeal to honorable members to support the Speaker in maintaining order and insuring reasonable discussion.

Mr. STEWART.—On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I ask if the Minister is in order in accusing the honorable member for Cowper (Dr. Earle Page) of hypocrisy?

Mr. GROOM.—If the honorable member for Cowper considers the remark offensive, then I shall withdraw it. But all honorable members know that what I have said as to the reasons underlying the amendments to the redistribution schemes is absolutely correct.

Mr. STEWART.—We support the amendments because they are more equitable proposals than the Government scheme.

*Several honorable members interjecting,*

Mr. SPEAKER.—Order! I do not propose to wear out my throat calling for order in this manner, and I intimate that unless these disorderly interjections cease I shall be obliged to enforce the Standing

Orders against any honorable member who so offends after I have called for order.

Mr. ANSTEV.—On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I should like to know if the Minister is in order in turning his back upon the Chair, and addressing honorable members in the Corner?

Mr. SPEAKER.—Properly speaking, it is not in order to do that; but I realize that it is not done with the intention of showing disrespect to the Chair. All honorable members know that remarks should be addressed to the Speaker, and if that rule were observed more closely there would be considerably less disorder.

Mr. GROOM.—My facts as to the manner in which these amendments originated are absolutely correct, and in the circumstances it is extraordinary that honorable members should impute motives to the Government. The amendment submitted by the honorable member for Corangamite proposes that the redistribution scheme shall be sent back to the Commissioners for revision.

Mr. McGRATH.—And he gives his reasons.

Mr. GROOM.—He goes further. He desires the Government to give a direction to the Commissioners.

Mr. SCULLIN.—To carry out the law.

Mr. GROOM.—No; to give effect to what he considers should be done. He requests the House to give a direction to the Commissioners to revise the scheme with the object of showing more regard for community of interest up to the margin provided for in section 19 of the Commonwealth Electoral Act. The intention of that Act is to secure the appointment of an absolutely independent body for the purpose of making a complete examination of the position and reporting to Parliament as to readjustment of electoral boundaries, having full regard to community of interest, means of communication, physical features, existing boundaries of divisions and subdivisions and State electoral boundaries. For the purpose of achieving this object the Commissioners are allowed to depart from the rule of equality to the extent of one-fifth below or one-fifth above the quota.

Mr. PROWSE.—They have not done that.

Mr. GROOM.—I say they have considered it. They have made a very careful examination of the position, and they have heard the objections.

Mr. LAVELLE.—Did you give them any instructions?

Mr. GROOM.—No.

Mr. LAVELLE.—It looks very suspicious.

Mr. GROOM.—The honorable member is making a suggestion that is highly improper. The Commissioners were, by the Act, constituted an independent tribunal, and they have, as I have remarked, considered all the objections and have made their report, independent of party or political influences. Now the honorable member is asking us to do something contrary to the spirit of the law, namely, that we should direct the Commissioners as to how they should carry out their work.

Mr. STEWART.—Does the Minister assert that the Commissioners are not allowed under the Act to do the work again?

Mr. GROOM.—I do not say that; but it would be highly improper for this House to direct them as to how they should do their work. The Commissioners were appointed so that the work of redistribution should be entirely apart and free from all party political influences. That was the sole purpose of intrusting this work to independent Commissioners. But we are asked to direct the Commissioners to make a fresh redistribution in which better regard shall be paid to the marginal allowance provided for in section 19 of the Act. That is to say, those men whose duty it is to divide the whole State into electorates so that the people of Victoria may be represented on a proper basis are to be told to reconstitute the divisions, and pay better regard to the marginal allowance.

Mr. MAXWELL.—If they exercised their best judgment in the first place, they would be compelled to give the same redistribution a second time.

Mr. GROOM.—That may be so. It is their duty to act independently, and without regard to party considerations.

Mr. SCULLIN.—Have we not a right to say that they have not had proper regard to the marginal allowance?

Mr. GROOM.—Honorable members have a perfect right to criticise the redistribution; but they cannot tell the Commissioners how they shall carry out a fresh redistribution. Suppose that some other party is of opinion that too much

consideration has been given to country interests in some other States, would not the honorable members who support this amendment oppose any attempt to direct the Commissioners to redistribute the seats in such a way as to reduce the representation given to the country? If we can direct them in one way we can direct them in others, and once that precedent were established, it would mean that any party with a numerical advantage in the House could send back any scheme of redistribution with which it was dissatisfied and instruct the Commissioners to do something more to the party's liking. If there were in this scheme of redistribution something so unfair as to shock the consciences and sense of fairness of honorable members, they would be justified in sending it back to the Commissioners, but only with a direction to carry out an independent investigation. It would be highly improper for us to give them such a direction as the amendment suggests. I am not in possession of information as to what was in the minds of the Commissioners when they arranged this distribution. The Government have kept entirely apart from the work of that body. We know nothing more than that the Chief Electoral Officer certified the number of members to which each State is entitled and the quota of electors for each State, and all we received from the Commissioners was their reports, which it was our statutory obligation to bring before the House.

Mr. STEWART.—But we are not morally bound to swallow it.

Mr. GROOM.—Honorable members may, if they choose, reject the whole scheme; but that is not what is proposed in the amendment.

Mr. BRENNAN.—Has not that been done on occasions?

Mr. GROOM.—On previous occasions, schemes of redistribution have been rejected by the House, but I cannot recollect that Parliament ever directed the Electoral Commissioners as to how they should carry out their duties. To do that would be to introduce into the House all the evils of party manœuvring and gerrymandering. If any political party that is dissatisfied with a scheme of redistribution has a right to send it back to the Commissioners with a direction that they shall



do the work afresh according to instructions, we might as well repeal the Representation Act, and restore the old political method.

Mr. PROUSE.—The Minister's statement is a mere stretch of the imagination. All that the amendment does is to direct the attention of the Commissioners to sections in the Act.

Mr. GROOM.—And is it intended that they should merely read this direction and throw it aside? No; honorable members who have spoken have said that they desire the direction to be given to the Commissioners, because in their opinion country interests are not properly provided for.

COUNTRY MEMBERS.—Hear, hear!

Mr. GROOM.—It is evident from the indorsement which that proposal received from honorable members of the Country party that it is desired that Parliament shall give a direction to the Commissioners to redistribute the representation in such a way as to give a larger margin to country electorates. What is that but direct political interference with the Commissioners in the performance of their duty? In these circumstances it is impossible for me to accept the amendment as proposed by the honorable member.

Mr. GIBSON.—If they had exercised their discretion to the full extent of the margin allowed in the Act there would have been another country electorate in Victoria.

Mr. GROOM.—The Commissioners may have had good reason for doing as they have done. I do not know what was in their minds.

Mr. HILL.—Why not ask them for their reasons?

Mr. GROOM.—No; these Commissioners are independent men, and it would be a bad thing if the Executive attempted to interfere in any way with the manner in which they carry out their duties.

Mr. McGRATH (Ballarat) [12.7].—I intend to support the amendment, but for reasons different from those advanced by the honorable member for Corangamite (Mr. Gibson) and the honorable member for Wimmera (Mr. Stewart). In the first place, I am not at all satisfied that increased representation of country interests will promote decentralization.

Mr. STEWART.—It might help to do so.

Mr. McGRATH.—I am not sure of that. In the Victorian State Parliament there has been the widest possible margin between the country and city representation. In some country electorates which have declined, members represent only about 4,000 electors, whereas some city members represent 44,000 electors, but that disparity has not cured the evil of centralization. In my opinion it will be cured, not by the representation given to country or city, but by the party that is put in power. In the States in which the Labour party has been strongest there is less decentralization. I believe in the principle of one vote one value. I remember reading the debates in this Parliament when Sir George Reid resigned his position in the House for that principle. He fought for one vote one value, but he realized that there must be a discretionary margin, and that the Commissioners should apply it in favour of the country rather than of the city. In country electorates there are vast areas, and it is almost impossible for honorable members to keep in touch with their constituents. The Attorney-General (Mr. Groom) says no pressure has been brought to bear upon the Commissioners, but I say, with all respect to him, that if three Nationalists had been appointed to devise a scheme they could not have done it better to suit the interests of the Nationalist party. There may have been no jerry-mandering, but the Commissioners have done good work for the Government. In the electorate of Fawkner, which one could traverse on a threepenny tram ride, there are 42,774 electors, but in my own electorate of Ballarat, that approaches the metropolis as far as Sunshine, and extends west to Geelong and Colac, then to Clunes in one direction, and to Smeaton in another direction, there are 43,633 electors. Henty, another pocket borough, has 41,607 electors, and Wannon, with an area of 8,000 square miles, fully fifty times as large as all the metropolitan electorates lumped together, has 44,230 electors. Maribyrnong, a metropolitan electorate, has 41,966 electors, and Corio, a country electorate, 43,449 electors. In the three city electorates I have mentioned there are 126,377 electors, and in the three country electorates 131,142 electors. If the Commissioners had been honestly desirous of doing their duty to Parliament, and to

the people of Victoria, they would certainly have exercised the discretionary power given them under the Act, and allowed the margin to operate in favour of the country interests,\* but they have done the opposite; they have allotted a smaller number of electors to city constituencies, and a larger number to country electorates. That is most unfair, and for that reason I shall vote for the amendment. I cannot understand country members, particularly Victorian members, either absenting themselves from the division that took place last night, or voting against the proposal made by the Leader of the Country party. Any honorable member who thinks that this scheme is equitable can have no sense of justice.

Mr. GROOM.—The Victorian country constituencies are small compared with those in other States.

Mr. McGRATH.—We are not comparing Victorian country constituencies with country constituencies in Western Australia, or Queensland, or New South Wales. The fact that the electorates are very big in those States is no reason why there should be in Victoria 44,000 electors in a constituency comprising 8,000 square miles, and only 41,000 electors in a constituency comprising only a few miles. I guarantee that my own electorate of Ballarat is as difficult to travel through as is any other, because it includes dozens of small towns. In the last general election campaign, extending over three months, I had to speak three or four times daily in order to get round to the various centres, and when additional territory is added to the electorate, it will be impossible for a candidate to visit all the places. The Government have agreed to the proposal made by the Commissioners. They think so much of the interests of the country that they are prepared to disfranchise 60,000 electors in Victoria.

Mr. GROOM.—In what way? Every one of those electors will be on some roll.

Mr. McGRATH.—Because the electoral quota in Victoria is 3,000 greater per division than is that of New South Wales. No doubt, as the Minister interjects, these people are on the rolls, but they are not securing the representation that is given the people of New South Wales.

Mr. HECTOR LAMOND.—That has nothing to do with the amendment.

Mr. McGRATH.—It has everything to do with it. If the scheme be sent back to the Commissioners, with a direction that the benefit of the margin must be given to the country districts, justice will be done.

Mr. GROOM.—That would not alter the total representation of Victoria in this House.

Mr. McGRATH.—No; but it would take away one representative from the metropolitan areas and give an additional member to the country districts. Some of the representatives of Victoria, by their vote on a certain question last night, sacrificed the interests of this State, as well as those of New South Wales. We appeal to them now not to sacrifice the country interests of Victoria. We cannot save these 60,000 people, but we can upset this scheme which is so unfair in its application to country residents.

Mr. STEWART.—They could have been saved last night.

Mr. McGRATH.—Yes. It seems to me most unfair that Victoria, although its population has increased by 250,000 during the last ten years, is to lose one representative, while two big country electorates have been removed from the electoral map. I hope that, notwithstanding the plausible arguments of the Attorney-General, honorable members opposite will deal justly with those Victorian constituencies. This question should not be approached in a party spirit. The Minister has spoken of the introduction of party feeling into the debate, but I would remind the House that he introduced it last night.

Mr. POYNTON.—What sort of divisions would we have if honorable members were allowed to determine the boundaries of their own constituencies.

Mr. McGRATH.—We do not ask for anything of the kind. Our sole contention is that the requirements of the law should be observed. I have no hesitation in saying that the provision of the Electoral Act, in regard to the recognition of community of interest, has been absolutely departed from in the drawing up of this scheme. The Postmaster-General (Mr. Poynton), who has just interjected, has lived in Ballarat, and I would draw his attention to what has been done in regard to that electorate. I think he will



agree that there is no community of interest between Bacchus Marsh and Ballarat, yet Bacchus Marsh has been added to the division. The people of Bacchus Marsh rarely go to Ballarat; they trade almost wholly with Melbourne, which is much nearer. The same statement applies to subdivisions on the Geelong line. The people of Bannockburn and Lethbridge, who, under this scheme, will be in the electorate of Ballarat have no community of interest with that city. They trade, not with Ballarat, but with Geelong. Then again, Beac instead of being in the electorate of Ballarat should have been included in the same division as Colac.

Mr. GIBSON.—The subdivision of Bannockburn is within 7 miles of Geelong, yet it is included in the same division as the city of Ballarat, which is 60 miles away.

Mr. McGRATH.—That is so. There is no justification for the inclusion of these districts in the Ballarat electorate. The same remark will apply to the inclusion of Deer Park and Melton—districts that are only 8 or 10 miles from Melbourne. How can it be said that in the preparation of this scheme attention has been given to the requirement as to community of interest? I have no hesitation in saying that these extraordinary alterations have been designedly made. It was determined that, by fair means or foul, rural districts in Victoria should lose two representatives. Two of the old divisions have been wiped out, and the remaining country electorates have been cut and hacked about without any regard whatever to community of interest.

Then, again, no attention has been given to the proper distribution of population. We have in the electorate of Ballarat 1,000 or 1,500 more electors than there are in any of the packed metropolitan constituencies. I hope that when we proceed to a division on this amendment the Attorney-General will not crack the party whip, as he did last night, and declare this to be a purely party matter. If no special instructions were given to the Commissioners, the Government should allow honorable members to deal with this matter quite independently of party considerations. We want to do the best for Victoria. The statement that the Commissioners have made their calculations with due regard to what may be

the position ten years hence does not say much for the legislation in force here, seeing that they anticipate apparently that at the end of that period the population of the country districts will still be declining.

Mr. GROOM.—The population of the country districts may not decline, but there may be a change from one part to another.

Mr. McGRATH.—At all events, no country electorate is more prosperous to-day than is Ballarat. It is true that Ballarat, after the cessation of mining operations there, underwent a period of serious depression, but new industries are springing up, and from a business point of view that part of the State was never more prosperous than it is to-day. There is no likelihood of the population of Ballarat decreasing. On the contrary, it is certain to increase, yet the Commissioners assume that a few years hence we shall have only 25,000 or 30,000 electors there. That being so, why should we be asked to accept this iniquitous proposition? I sincerely hope the amendment will be carried.

Mr. PROWSE (Swan) [12.22].—I support the amendment on the broadest of national lines. I was a member of one of the deputations to which reference has been made by the honorable member for Corangamite (Mr. Gibson), and I distinctly heard a responsible Minister give the assurance that this would not be regarded as a party matter. I object to the statement made by the Attorney-General (Mr. Groom) that party politics have been introduced into the debate by the Country party. Why should such a charge be levelled against us merely because, in the interests of fair representation, we happen to vote unitedly? The honorable gentleman made that suggestion as an excuse for the action of the Government in cracking the party whip last night, and inducing some of their supporters, who otherwise would have voted with us, to vote on strict party lines by threatening that there would be a dissolution if the Government were defeated. I am very sorry that certain representatives of Victoria were not strong enough to disregard that threat.

Mr. HIGGS.—Is this permissible?

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. Sir Elliot Johnson).—I was just about to point out to the honorable member for Swan that it is not in order to reflect on a vote of the House.

Mr. PROWSE.—I maintain that it was quite improper for the Attorney-General to suggest that honorable members of the Country party were introducing party politics merely because they stood solidly for certain principles of justice. It is only natural that we should vote unitedly to secure justice for all. The honorable gentleman has also said that the amendment invites the Commissioners charged with the distribution of seats to do something in accordance with the bidding of the House and contrary to the Constitution. He is wrong. The amendment merely proposes that the attention of the Commissioners shall be specially drawn to section 19 of the Act, which provides that in any scheme of distribution regard shall be had to community of interest. Country interests cannot be so easily represented as some honorable members appear to think. There must be a lot of insincerity either on the part of the press or amongst honorable members—if I may say so without reflecting on them—

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honorable member is not in order in reflecting on honorable members.

Mr. PROWSE.—Then I withdraw the statement. The press of Australia is much perturbed by the centralizing influences which are at work, and regards with serious apprehension the drift of country population to our cities.

Mr. STEWART.—So does the Government.

Mr. PROWSE.—That is so. They say that the only immigrants they desire are those who will go on the land; yet they are not prepared to give an adequate system of representation to country districts. When we find the number of voters in the country constituency to which reference has been made is, with one exception, larger than that of any metropolitan electorate we must realize that the requirements of the Constitution have been disregarded. The House would be lax in its duty if it did not point out to the Commissioners that in this scheme they have not given effect to the will of the framers of the Constitution. The same thing seems to have occurred in other States. In Perth Division one could stand in the centre and a rifle shot would reach the farthest boundary; whereas, whilst Kalgoorlie Division, which contains about

eleven-twelfths of Western Australia, which is about one-third of Australia, is made to contain practically the same number of electors as Perth. That is not fair. No wonder people in country districts, finding that they are not given fair representation, flock to the cities. National interests are involved in this question, and party considerations should be wholly set aside. This is too great a question to be dealt with as a party matter, and there is absolutely no foundation for the suggestion of the Attorney-General that by sending back this scheme we would be using party politics to try to coerce the Commissioners. The proposal of the amendment is simply that we direct their attention, in a business-like way, to the fact that in drawing up this scheme they have disregarded a constitutional requirement. If the amendment be carried, with the result that the Commissioners review their work, and have due regard to section 19 of the Act, then country interests, which should be paramount, will have at least one more representative in this House. An additional 5 per cent. would give Victoria another representative. If the provision as to a margin up to one-fifth were recognised, the country would have two more representatives. But it has not been in any sense regarded. It seems to me that this distribution has been framed on a purely *per capita* basis. That is not the intention of the Constitution, and in the circumstances it would not be unbecoming for the House to ask the Commissioners to review their work in the light of the provisions of section 19 of the Electoral Act.

Mr. LISTER (Corio) [12.30].—It is regrettable that so many suggestions should be thrown out that honorable members, in supporting the amendment, are actuated by ulterior motives. In the words used by the honorable member for Swan (Mr. Prowse), I am endeavouring to look at this matter on broad national lines. If I were to consult my own interests, I would be found supporting the Government in this connexion, because careful scrutiny of the votes cast at the last election indicates that, through a re-submission of the boundaries of the Corio electorate to the Distributing Commissioners, there would be a possibility of my losing 2,000 or 3,000 good National



votes. Of course, I do not say that if this should happen it would materially affect the position in the electorate. But I look at the matter from an Australian point of view rather than from the point of view of the interests of the party of which I am a member. It is regrettable that party aspects should enter into almost every discussion in this Chamber. I cannot understand what actuated the Commissioners in fixing the boundaries of the Victorian electoral divisions. They were supposed to pay regard to community of interest, and so forth. The honorable member for Bakarat (Mr. McGrath) has pointed out that many people whose electoral interests are centred in certain districts, have had them diverted to different channels, and I cannot appreciate why, in my own electorate, the district of Werribee has been retained, while the districts of Bannockburn and Meredith—which are situated a few miles from Geelong, the centre of the electorate—have been attached to another electorate, whose centre is 60 miles away. Similar instances of a departure from the policy of community of interest can be found throughout the recent distribution. However, I am most concerned about the loss of country representation. It is not good for Australia that the development of country areas should be retarded. It is only those who live in country districts who realize the difficulty of getting in touch with their parliamentary representatives and making them acquainted with their needs. Therefore, country electorates should have the benefit of the margin of allowance provided for in the Act to a much greater extent than has been given in the Commissioners' proposals. I support the amendment because country interests have not been conserved in the scheme of redistribution, and because I think that the margin of allowance provided for in the Electoral Act should have been utilized to a greater extent than it has been.

Mr. BELL (Darwin) [12.36].—I support the amendment. Country interests have not been safeguarded by the Distribution Commissioners. Particularly is this the case in Victoria. Yesterday we had to decide quite a different matter. The arguments for or against the proposal submitted by the honorable member for Cowper (Dr. Earle Page) were difficult

to follow, and at times confusing to myself; but I gathered that the honorable member's method of finding the quota upon which the representation of the various States is based was to increase the number of members of this House; and I felt that a very much better case would have to be put up by the honorable member to justify me in supporting such a proposal. However, the amendment brought forward to-day is one that I feel I must support, particularly when I find that country electorates, such as Wannon and Corio, are to contain more electors than are included in city divisions. I hold that country interests have not been safeguarded, and that the Distribution Commissioners should take into consideration community of interest more than they have done in their present proposals.

Dr. EARLE PAGE (Cowper) [12.40].—I support the amendment moved by the honorable member for Corangamite (Mr. Gibson). If something is not done to insure more adequate representation of country interests, we are likely to see a greater rate of rural decline than we have seen during the last twenty or thirty years, a decline which has been specially marked in Victoria. In this State particularly, the Distribution Commissioners have not observed those conditions of community of interest and physical configurations which it is obligatory on them to consider in carrying out their task. The practice adopted in previous distributions, that of taking into consideration the fact that certain electorates were likely to increase very rapidly in population, has also been departed from. In the last distribution there was a definite margin of 4,000 or 5,000 between various New South Wales country constituencies and Sydney electorates, because it was understood from the character of the population, and the character of the industries being carried on in certain divisions, that the number of electors in those divisions would markedly increase. Such proved to be the case. On the other hand, in the distribution of Victorian electorates, we find that no heed has been paid to this possibility. For instance, in the Wimmera district there has been a considerable amount of repatriation settlement during the last two or three years; there has also been great irrigation development, and there

are possibilities of a very rapid extension of settlement through the carrying out of the Murray River waters scheme, yet the Wimmera electorate has been enormously enlarged, and its quota has been brought up as high as that of any other division. Take also the case of the Wannon electorate. In this district we have had evidence that the Government of Victoria intend to leave no stone unturned to develop the port of Portland, one of the natural outlets for the produce of Australia. The State Government have also made arrangements for the shipment of wheat from that centre, and have announced their intention of increasing the railway facilities. We also know that there is every possibility of continuous and progressive settlement in the wheat country back from Portland. Despite these facts, the Wannon electorate has not only been enlarged, but has also been given an electoral quota greater than that of any other Victorian division. Whereas Balaclava will have 43,000 electors, Maribyrnong 41,966 electors, and Henty 41,607 electors, Wannon will have 44,230 electors. That is practically 3,000 more than Maribyrnong. The electors in the nine proposed divisions regarded as extra metropolitan include 43,363 in Ballarat, 42,615 in Bendigo, and 43,449 in Corio. The last-named electorate, by the way, will be nearly three times as large as at present. Then there is Echuca, with a total of 41,438 electors, which will be practically twice as big as formerly, and Flinders, with 42,081, which will also be bigger. Practically the whole of eastern Victoria is to be gathered into the Division of Gippsland, with a total of 42,717 electors. Indi, having 42,316, will be almost half as big again; and then there are the two western electorates, which have already been dealt with, namely, Wannon, with its largest of all aggregates, and Wimmera. For almost all the country divisions the quotas allotted are practically equal to the largest of the metropolitan divisions.

Though there may have been some selfish adherence to the principle of one man one vote, there has been no adherence to that of one vote one value. The conditions in the divisions of Wimmera and Wannon are different from those of Balaclava and Maribyrnong. In Wimmera,

there will be from 150 to 200 polling places; while, in some of the metropolitan electorates, there will be not more than sixteen or twenty. The country polling places are separated by great distances, and the means of approach to them are very bad; indeed, there are often no roads at all. Not only is it a task for electors to record their votes, but it is infinitely more difficult for candidates or the selected representative to get about among the outlying areas. In my own electorate, which is practically on all fours with Echuca, there are about 230 polling places. If I were to speak at four places a day my campaign would be prolonged for about three months. But many of the metropolitan constituencies may be covered, so to speak, by a pocket handkerchief; and their representatives may place themselves in touch with the whole of the electors by speaking at half-a-dozen halls. These constituents also may be reached without effort, by medium of the daily metropolitan press, which affords considerable space to political matters. In many country districts there may be only a small weekly newspaper, the greater proportion of whose pages is necessarily devoted to advertisements, so that there is little room for political propaganda. It is essential that candidates should get into personal touch with electors, and it is grossly unfair that the numbers of voters in extra metropolitan divisions should be proposed to be made, as nearly as possible, identical with those in metropolitan. In the north-western corner of Victoria, there is an almost entire absence of railways. Very few newspapers circulate in the Wimmera. The Mildura press, for example, has no public means of distribution over the greater part of the area which it covers, and deliveries have to be undertaken by motor and the like. Unless provision is inserted in our legislation, and carried into effect by the Redistribution Commissioners, insuring that there shall be no further extension of country electorates, the various States will consist almost entirely of metropolitan electorates, while the whole of the areas outside of the cities will be one huge division, the task of contesting which will be almost as formidable as in campaigning for a Senate seat.



The main reason why rural areas are becoming depopulated is that their interests cannot be adequately safeguarded. There is, in the first place, the difficulty of maintaining touch between a representative and his electors; and then there are not enough country representatives to put up a proper fight for rural claims and requirements. There is an axiom that the avocations which men follow, and the situations in which they dwell, are determined by the incidence of taxation and the conduct of the Government towards them. The conduct of any Government towards any body of people is largely determined by the political support which its representatives are able to give to that particular Government at a particular time. By reason of the fact that country representation has been consistently diminishing, less and less political weight has attached to the problems and requirements of country dwellers. In Victoria, for instance, a condition has existed which country representatives have vainly deplored. Owing to the metropolitan policy being properly organized and almost overwhelmingly advocated, even such considerable country centres as Ballarat, Bendigo, and Castlemaine have been hampered and handicapped. There have been such anomalies and examples of unfairness as the imposition of differential railway freight rates and the like. The country continues to languish; yet, under the proposed redistribution, country electorates are to be made bigger and bigger. Such an outcome will inflict serious injustice upon rural residents, and will still more grossly flout the principle of one vote one value. The Minister for Defence (Mr. Greene) maintained some days ago that, because there had been an increase in the value of primary production, there had obviously been an enormous expansion of production itself. But figures have been quoted which disprove that argument. In Sydney only two days ago the vice-president of the Bank of Commerce, Mr. Yarwood, quoted statistics which bore out all the statements which I and other members of the Country party have made indicative of the fact that producers in Australia are in a parlous state. One reason for this lies in the paucity of their representation in the National Legislature. And now the total number of country seats is to be reduced.

Population in the Victorian metropolitan area during the past twenty years has advanced very much more rapidly than in the remainder of the State. That is an alarming position, which should be ended. The estimated area of the Melbourne metropolitan districts is 225 square miles. Under the redistribution proposals that area will have eleven representatives. Each member will represent somewhat less than 30 square miles of country. The total population of the metropolitan area is 782,979; the proportion per cent. of the total population of the State is 51.12. The number of people to the square mile is 3,070. The total population of the remainder of the State, which comprises 87,629 square miles, is 748,550, or about 34,000 less people than in the capital itself. The proportion per cent. is 48.88, and the number of persons to the square mile is 8.5. I ask leave to continue my remarks at a later hour of the day.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

*Sitting suspended from 1.1 to 2.15 p.m.*

## CUSTOMS TARIFF (NEW ZEALAND PREFERENCE).

*In Committee of Ways and Means—*

Mr. RODGERS (Wannon—Minister for Trade and Customs) [2.15].—I desire to lay on the table of the House a copy of the agreement between the Commonwealth and the Dominion of New Zealand providing for a Reciprocal Tariff. \* It is as follows:—

AGREEMENT made this eleventh day of April, One thousand nine hundred and twenty-two, between the Commonwealth of Australia (hereinafter called "the Commonwealth") of the one part and the Dominion of New Zealand (hereinafter called "the Dominion") of the other part:

Whereas with a view to the arrangement of more equitable trade relations between the Commonwealth and the Dominion, the Ministers of Customs for the said countries have agreed to recommend to their respective Parliaments Customs duties in accordance with the schedule attached hereto:—

Now therefore it is hereby agreed as follows:—

1. The said schedule shall come into force on a date to be proclaimed by the Governor-General of the Commonwealth and the Governor-General of the Dominion, after the Parliaments of both countries have signified their acceptance thereof, and shall (subject to the provisions of this agreement) remain in force until six months' notice of the termination thereof has been given by either party.

2. The Commonwealth shall not impose any Customs duty or increase the rate of any Customs duty on any article entering the Commonwealth from the Dominion, and the Dominion shall not impose any Customs duty or increase the rate of any Customs duty on any article entering the Dominion from the Commonwealth (whether such article is or is not specifically enumerated in the schedule hereto, and whether such article is or is not dutiable at the date of this agreement), except by mutual agreement, until after six months' notice to the other party to this agreement.

3. Nothing in this agreement shall be construed to affect the right of the Commonwealth or of the Dominion to impose new duties upon any articles for the protection of any new industry established or proposed to be established in the Commonwealth or the Dominion as the case may be; provided that such new duties do not exceed the duties imposed on the importation of similar articles from the United Kingdom into the Commonwealth or the Dominion as the case may be.

4. Nothing in this agreement shall be construed to affect the right of the Commonwealth or the Dominion to bring into force suspended or deferred duties, or to collect or impose dumping duties, or analogous special duties to meet abnormal trading conditions.

5. Nothing in this agreement shall be construed to affect the right of the Commonwealth to impose primage or other general duties, provided that such duties on goods imported from New Zealand do not exceed the duties imposed on similar goods imported from the United Kingdom.

6. All goods enumerated in the schedule hereto shall be liable to such primage duty, if any, upon entry into the Dominion, as shall for the time being be in force, provided that such duty does not exceed the primage duty on similar goods imported from the United Kingdom.

7. Goods imported into the Commonwealth, and thereafter transhipped to the Dominion, which if they had been imported direct from the country of origin to the Dominion would have been entitled to be entered under the British Preferential Tariff in the Dominion, shall, upon production of a certificate from the Customs Department of the Commonwealth stating the country of origin of the goods and such other information as is required, be entitled to be entered under the British Preferential Tariff in the Dominion.

8. Goods imported into the Dominion, and thereafter transhipped to the Commonwealth, which if they had been imported direct from the country of origin to the Commonwealth would have been entitled to be entered under the British Preferential Tariff in the Commonwealth, shall, upon production of a certificate from the Customs Department of the Dominion stating the country of origin of the goods and such other information as is required, be entitled to be entered under the British Preferential Tariff in the Commonwealth.

9. The provisions of the last two preceding clauses of this agreement shall operate from the first day of May, One thousand nine hundred and twenty-two, notwithstanding that this agreement may not at that date have been ratified by the Parliament of either country.

*Mr. Rodgers.*

10. No special rebate or bounty shall be granted by the Commonwealth or the Dominion in respect of the sugar contained in any goods exported from the Commonwealth or the Dominion, as the case may be, to the Dominion or the Commonwealth.

ARTHUR S. RODGERS. (L.S.)

Signed, sealed and delivered by the Honorable Arthur Stanislaus Rodgers, Minister for Trade and Customs of the Commonwealth of Australia, for and on behalf of the Commonwealth, in the presence of—

R. MCK. OAKLEY,  
Chairman, Tariff Board, Australia.

WM. DOWNIE STEWART. (L.S.)

Signed, sealed and delivered by the Honorable William Downie Stewart, Minister of Customs for the Dominion of New Zealand, for and on behalf of the Dominion, in the presence of—

W. B. MONTGOMERY,  
Comptroller of Customs, New Zealand.

I move—

(1) That in lieu of the duties of Customs imposed by the Customs Tariff 1921 on goods the produce or manufacture of the Dominion of New Zealand imported direct from that Dominion, there be imposed on and after a time and date to be proclaimed, duties of Customs, as hereinafter set out, on the under-mentioned goods the produce or manufacture of the Dominion of New Zealand imported direct from the said Dominion, namely:—

- (a) on all goods described in the schedule to this resolution in the column headed "Item", against which rates of duty are set out in the column headed "Proposed Duties against New Zealand", at the rates of duty so set out;
- (b) on all goods other than those provided for in sub-paragraph (a) of paragraph (1) of this resolution, at the rates of duty for the time being applicable to goods to which the British Preferential Tariff in the Customs Tariff 1921 applies:

Provided that nothing in this resolution shall affect the right of the Commonwealth to impose or collect any duties chargeable under the Customs Tariff (Industries Preservation) Act 1921.

(2) That on and after the 1st day of May, 1922, duties of Customs, at the rates set forth in the column headed "British Preferential Tariff" in the Schedule to the Customs Tariff 1921, be imposed on the following goods, namely:—

Goods (not the produce or manufacture of the Dominion of New Zealand)—

- (a) which are imported into the Commonwealth from that Dominion; and
- (b) upon which, if they had been imported into the Commonwealth direct from the country of origin, there would have been payable duties of Customs at the rates set forth in the column headed "British Preferential Tariff" in the Schedule to the Customs Tariff 1921.



# SCHEDULE.

NOTE.—(1) Where any item bears after it the letters *n.e.i.*, these letters shall be interpreted in the same sense as when applied to the Tariff Items from which the Items of this Schedule are derived.

(2) Goods entering Australia from New Zealand at present fall under the General Tariff, and goods entering New Zealand from Australia are treated in the same manner.

| Consecutive No. | Tariff Item Nos.—<br>A.—Australian.<br>B.—New Zealand.<br>C.—Special. | Item.                                                                                                                                                        | AUSTRALIA.                       |                    |                                            |           | NEW ZEALAND.                     |                    |                                          |                |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------------|-----------|----------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------------------|----------------|
|                 |                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                              | Present Duties.<br>Tariff.       |                    | Proposed Duties<br>against<br>New Zealand. |           | Present Duties.<br>Tariff.       |                    | Proposed Duties<br>against<br>Australia. |                |
|                 |                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                              | British<br>Preference<br>entail. | Inter-<br>mediate. | General.                                   |           | British<br>Preference<br>entail. | Inter-<br>mediate. | General.                                 |                |
| 1               | B.                                                                    | Animals, living:—                                                                                                                                            |                                  |                    |                                            |           |                                  |                    |                                          |                |
| 2               | B.                                                                    | Cattle, horned, other than for stud purposes                                                                                                                 | Free                             | Free               | Free                                       | Free      | ea. 10s.                         | 10s.               | 10s.                                     | Free           |
| 3               | B.                                                                    | Horses, other than for stud purposes                                                                                                                         | Free                             | Free               | Free                                       | Free      | ea. £1                           | £1                 | £1                                       | Free           |
| 4               | A.                                                                    | Bacon and Hams, partly or wholly cured                                                                                                                       | 3d.                              | 4d.                | 4d.                                        | 2d.       | 2d.                              | 3d.                | 4d.                                      | 2d.            |
| 5               | B.                                                                    | Beeswax                                                                                                                                                      | 1d.                              | 1d.                | 1½d.                                       | Free      | Free                             | Free               | Free                                     | Free           |
| 6               | C.                                                                    | Butter and Cheese (except cheese pastes and tinned or bottled cheese)                                                                                        | 3d.                              | 3d.                | 3d.                                        | 2d.       | 20%<br>ad val.                   | 30%<br>ad val.     | 35%<br>ad val.                           | per lb.<br>2d. |
| 7               | A.                                                                    | Coffee, roasted or ground, in liquid form; or mixed with milk or other substance                                                                             | 6d.                              | 6d.                | 6d.                                        | 6d.       | 3d.                              | 4d.                | 5d.                                      | 5d.            |
| 8               | B.                                                                    | Coffee, roasted                                                                                                                                              | ..                               | ..                 | ..                                         | ..        | ..                               | ..                 | ..                                       | 25%            |
| 9               | B.                                                                    | Coffee, essence of, and Essence of Coffee with milk or any other food substance                                                                              | ..                               | ..                 | ..                                         | ..        | ..                               | ..                 | ..                                       | ..             |
|                 |                                                                       | <i>Confectionery n.e.i.</i> , including medicated lozenges, medicated confectionery, boiled sugars, liquorice <i>n.e.i.</i> , sugared or crystallized fruits | 3d.<br>35%                       | 3½d.<br>45%        | 3½d.<br>45%                                | 2d.<br>.. | 2d.<br>..                        | 2½d.<br>..         | 3d.<br>..                                | 2d.            |
|                 |                                                                       | whichever rate returns the higher duty                                                                                                                       |                                  |                    |                                            |           |                                  |                    |                                          |                |

## AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS AND GROCERIES—

## SCHEDULE—continued.

| Consecutive No.                                | Tariff Item Nos.—<br>A.—Australia.<br>B.—New Zealand.<br>C.—Special. | Item.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | AUSTRALIA.                                  |                                                 |                                             | Proposed Duties against New Zealand. | NEW ZEALAND.                     |                                  |                            | Proposed Duties against Australia. |
|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
|                                                |                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Present Duties. Tariff.                     |                                                 | British Preferential.                       |                                      | Present Duties. Tariff.          |                                  | British Preferential.      |                                    |
|                                                |                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Inter-mediate.                              | General.                                        |                                             |                                      | Inter-mediate.                   | General.                         |                            |                                    |
| AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS AND GROCERIES—continued. |                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                             |                                                 |                                             |                                      |                                  |                                  |                            |                                    |
| 10                                             | B. 42                                                                | Chocolate confectionery; mixtures of chocolate with other confectionery; and confectionery containing chocolate:—<br>(1) In plain trade packages .. .. per lb.<br>(2) In fancy packages, or in small packages for retail sale ad val.                                                                                                                                                                                   | ..                                          | ..                                              | 3d.                                         | 3d.                                  | 4d.                              | 5d.                              | 3d.                        | 3d.                                |
| 11                                             | B. 47                                                                | Fish, fresh, smoked, dried, pickled, salted, preserved by cold process, or preserved by sulphurous acid, n.e.i. .. per cwt.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | ..                                          | ..                                              | 20%                                         | 20%                                  | 30%                              | 35%                              | 20%                        | 20%                                |
| 12                                             | A. 51 (B)                                                            | Fish, smoked or dried (but not salted), or preserved by cold process .. .. per lb.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | ..                                          | ..                                              | ..                                          | ..                                   | 12s. 6d.                         | 15s.                             | Free                       | Free                               |
| 13                                             | A. 51 (E)                                                            | Fish, n.e.i. .. .. per cwt.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 1d.                                         | 1½d.                                            | Free                                        | Free                                 | 3d.                              | 3d.                              | Free                       | Free                               |
| 14                                             | C. 14                                                                | Fish, canned, not including fish pastes .. .. per lb.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | 1d.                                         | 1½d.                                            | Free                                        | Free                                 | 3d.                              | 3d.                              | Free                       | Free                               |
| 15                                             | C. 15                                                                | Fish Pastes .. .. ad val.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | 25%                                         | 25%                                             | 20%                                         | 20%                                  | 20%                              | 20%                              | 20%                        | 20%                                |
| 16                                             | A. 51 (F)                                                            | Oysters, fresh, in the shell .. .. per cwt.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 2s.                                         | 2s.                                             | Free                                        | Free                                 | 12s. 6d.                         | 15s.                             | Free                       | Free                               |
| 17                                             | B. 59                                                                | Fruits preserved in juice or syrup .. .. ad val.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | ..                                          | ..                                              | ..                                          | ..                                   | 35%                              | 40%                              | 35%                        | 35%                                |
| 18                                             | A. 54 (A) to (F)                                                     | Fruits (preserved in liquid, or partly preserved, or pulped)—<br>(a) Quarter pints and smaller sizes .. .. per doz.<br>(b) Half pints and over quarter pints .. .. per doz.<br>(c) Pints and over half pints .. .. per doz.<br>(d) Quarts and over pints .. .. per doz.<br>(e) Exceeding a quart .. .. per gallon<br>(f) When preserved in spirituous liquid, additional duty to be paid on the liquid .. .. per gallon | 9d.<br>1s. 3d.<br>2s. 6d.<br>5s.<br>1s. 9d. | 1s.<br>1s. 9d.<br>3s. 6d.<br>7s. 6d.<br>2s. 6d. | 9d.<br>1s. 3d.<br>2s. 6d.<br>5s.<br>1s. 9d. | 3d.<br>3d.<br>20%<br>12s. 6d.<br>35% | 3d.<br>3d.<br>20%<br>15s.<br>40% | 3d.<br>3d.<br>20%<br>15s.<br>40% | Free<br>20%<br>Free<br>35% | Free<br>20%<br>Free<br>35%         |
| 19                                             | A. 57 (D)                                                            | Grain and Pulse, n.e.i., not prepared or manufactured .. .. per cental                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 30s.                                        | 31s.                                            | 30s.                                        | 30s.                                 | 2s.                              | 2s.                              | 1s. 6d.                    | 1s. 6d.                            |
| 20                                             | C. 20                                                                | Grain and Pulse, prepared or manufactured, viz.:—<br>Oatmeal and Rolled Oats .. .. per lb.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | 1s. 6d.                                     | 1s. 6d.                                         | 1s. 6d.                                     | per cental                           | 1d.                              | 1d.                              | per cental                 | per cental                         |
| 21                                             | A. 59                                                                | Hay and Chaff .. .. per ton.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | £1                                          | £1                                              | £1                                          | £1                                   | £1                               | £1                               | Free                       | Free                               |
| 22                                             | A. 62                                                                | Hops .. .. per lb.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | 6d.                                         | 9d.                                             | 9d.                                         | 9d.                                  | 9d.                              | 9d.                              | 9d.                        | 9d.                                |
|                                                | B. 17                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                             |                                                 |                                             |                                      |                                  |                                  |                            |                                    |



## SCHEDULE—continued.

|                                                |                                                                       | AUSTRALIA.                                                                                                                   |                               |                    | NEW ZEALAND.                               |                            |                                                                                                                                                   |                                          |
|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Consecutive No.                                | Tariff Item Nos.—<br>A.—Australian.<br>B.—New Zealand.<br>C.—Special. | Item.                                                                                                                        | Present Duties.<br>Tariff.    |                    | Proposed Duties<br>against<br>New Zealand. | Present Duties.<br>Tariff. |                                                                                                                                                   | Proposed Duties<br>against<br>Australia. |
|                                                |                                                                       |                                                                                                                              | British<br>Prefer-<br>ential. | Inter-<br>mediate. |                                            | General.                   | British<br>Prefer-<br>ential.                                                                                                                     |                                          |
| AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS AND GROCERIES—continued. |                                                                       |                                                                                                                              |                               |                    |                                            |                            |                                                                                                                                                   |                                          |
| 23                                             | B.                                                                    | Jams, Jellies, Marmalade, and Preserves .. .. .                                                                              | ..                            | ..                 | ..                                         | 2d.                        | 2½d.<br>or package of that reputed weight<br>whichever rate is higher and so in pro-<br>portion for packages of greater or less<br>reputed weight | 2½d.                                     |
| 24                                             | A.                                                                    | Jams, and Jellies, including Calves' Foot, but not Meat Jellies<br>per lb.                                                   | 3d.                           | 3d.                | 2½d.                                       | 20%                        | 30%                                                                                                                                               | 30%                                      |
| 25                                             | B.                                                                    | Macaroni, Vermicelli, Spaghetti, Egnoodles, and similar<br>alimentary pastes .. .. .                                         | 1d.                           | 3d.                | 30%<br>ad val.                             | 20%                        | 35%<br>ad val.                                                                                                                                    | 30%                                      |
| 26                                             | B.                                                                    | Meats, Potted or Preserved .. .. .                                                                                           | ..                            | ..                 | ..                                         | 20%                        | 30%                                                                                                                                               | 20%                                      |
| 27                                             | C.                                                                    | Concentrated Soup .. .. .                                                                                                    | ..                            | ..                 | ..                                         | 20%                        | 30%                                                                                                                                               | 20%                                      |
| 28                                             | A.                                                                    | Meats, viz. :—<br>(a) Fresh or Smoked .. .. .                                                                                | 2d.                           | 2½d.               | 10%<br>ad val.                             | 20%                        | 30%                                                                                                                                               | 10%                                      |
| 29                                             | A.                                                                    | (b) Potted or concentrated, including extracts of, and<br>Meat Jellies; preparations in dry form for making<br>soups .. .. . | 30%                           | 40%                | 20%                                        | 20%                        | 35%<br>ad val.                                                                                                                                    | ad val.                                  |
| 30                                             | A.                                                                    | (c) Preserved in tins or other airtight vessels, including<br>the weight of the liquid contents .. .. .                      | 2d.                           | 2½d.               | 20%                                        | 20%                        | 35%<br>ad val.                                                                                                                                    | 10%                                      |
| 31                                             | A.                                                                    | (d) Preserved by cold process .. .. .                                                                                        | 2d.                           | 3d.                | ad val.                                    | ad val.                    | ad val.                                                                                                                                           | ad val.                                  |
| 32                                             | C.                                                                    | Milk dried or in powder form, and the same in combination<br>with casein, sugar of milk or other milk products.. .. .        | 3d.                           | 4d.                | 25%<br>ad val.                             | 25%                        | 40%<br>ad val.                                                                                                                                    | 25%                                      |
| 33                                             | C.                                                                    | Milk, preserved, condensed or concentrated, sweetened or<br>unsweetened .. .. .                                              | 2d.                           | 2½d.               | 25%<br>ad val.                             | 25%                        | 40%<br>ad val.                                                                                                                                    | 25%                                      |
| 34                                             | A.                                                                    | Milk, sugar of (Lactose) .. .. .                                                                                             | 30%                           | 40%                | 15%<br>ad val.                             | 10%                        | 25%<br>ad val.                                                                                                                                    | 15%                                      |
| 35                                             | A.                                                                    | Onions, in their natural state .. .. .                                                                                       | 6s.                           | 6s.                | £1 per ton                                 | £1                         | £1 10s.<br>per ton                                                                                                                                | £1                                       |
| 36                                             | A.                                                                    | Seed—Lucerne .. .. .                                                                                                         | 6d.                           | 9d.                | 3d.                                        | Free                       | Free                                                                                                                                              | Free                                     |

## SCHEDULE—continued.

| Consecutive No.                                | Tariff Item Nos.—<br>A.—Australian.<br>B.—New Zealand.<br>C.—Special. | Item.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | AUSTRALIA.             |                |                                      | NEW ZEALAND.           |                |                                    |
|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------|------------------------------------|
|                                                |                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Present Duties Tariff. |                | Proposed Duties against New Zealand. | Present Duties Tariff. |                | Proposed Duties against Australia. |
|                                                |                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | British Preferential.  | Inter-mediate. | General.                             | British Preferential.  | Inter-mediate. | General.                           |
| AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS AND GROCERIES—continued. |                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                        |                |                                      |                        |                |                                    |
| 37                                             | B.                                                                    | Soaps, all kinds; soap-powder, extract of soap, dry soap, soft soap, liquid soap, soap solutions; washing- or cleansing-powders, crystals, pastes and liquids, n.e.i. .. ad val.                                                          | ..                     | ..             | ..                                   | 25%                    | 37½%           | 45%                                |
| 38                                             | A.                                                                    | SOAP—<br>(A) Toilet, fancy, or medicated .. .. per lb. or ad val.                                                                                                                                                                         | 6d. 35%                | 8d. 40%        | 9d. 45%                              | ..                     | ..             | 30%                                |
|                                                |                                                                       | (B) N.E.I.; Soap substitutes and compounded detergents for washing and cleansing purposes, not including saponaceous disinfectants .. .. ad val.                                                                                          | 30%                    | 35%            | 40%                                  | ..                     | ..             | ..                                 |
| 39                                             | A.                                                                    | Tallow, unrefined—<br>(A) in packages exceeding 4 lbs. net weight .. per cwt. or ad val.                                                                                                                                                  | 2s. 10%                | 3s. 15%        | 4s. 20%                              | Free                   | Free           | Free                               |
| 40                                             | C.                                                                    | Vegetables, fresh, including beans and peas in pod .. per cwt. or ad val.                                                                                                                                                                 | 2s.                    | 2s.            | 2s.                                  | 20% ad val.            | 30% ad val.    | 35% ad val.                        |
| 41                                             | B.                                                                    | BEVERAGES—<br>Wine, Australian (not including sparkling), containing not more than 40% of proof spirit; per gallon, or for six reputed quart bottles, or the equivalent in bottles of a larger or smaller reputed capacity .. .. per gal. | ..                     | ..             | ..                                   | 5s.                    | 5s.            | 4s.                                |
| 42                                             | C.                                                                    | Wine, Australian, sparkling, containing not more than 40% of proof spirit; per gallon, or for six reputed quart bottles, or the equivalent in bottles of a larger or smaller reputed capacity .. .. per gal.                              | ..                     | ..             | ..                                   | 15s.                   | 15s.           | 10s.                               |
| 43                                             | B.                                                                    | APPAREL AND TEXTILES, VIZ.—<br>Textile piece-goods, of wool or containing wool, n.e.i. ad val.                                                                                                                                            | 30%                    | 40%            | 45%                                  | 20%                    | 30%            | 35%                                |
| 44                                             | B.                                                                    | Apparel, and ready-made clothing, n.e.i.; Hosiery, n.e.i. ad val.                                                                                                                                                                         | ..                     | ..             | ..                                   | 25%                    | 37½%           | 40%                                |



SCHEDULE—continued.

| Consecutive No. | Tariff Item Nos.—<br>A.—Australian.<br>B.—New Zealand.<br>C.—Special. | Item.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | AUSTRALIA.                                                       |                                                                   |                                                                | Proposed Duties against New Zealand. | NEW ZEALAND.            |                   |                   |  |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--|
|                 |                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Present Duties. Tariff.                                          |                                                                   |                                                                |                                      | Present Duties. Tariff. |                   |                   |  |
|                 |                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | British Preferential.                                            | Inter-mediate.                                                    | General.                                                       |                                      | British Preferential.   | Inter-mediate.    | General.          |  |
| 45              | 110 (A)<br>(B)<br>(C)                                                 | APPAREL AND TEXTILES—continued.<br>Apparel, articles of, viz. :—<br>(A) (1) Blouses and Skirts, of cotton, linen, or other material n.e.l. .. .. each<br>(2) Blouses and Skirts of wool or silk, or containing wool or silk .. .. each<br>(3) Coats, Girls' .. .. each<br>(4) Coats, Women's .. .. each<br>(5) Costumes, of cotton, linen, or other material n.e.l. each<br>(6) Costumes, of wool, or containing wool (except the costumes enumerated in sub-item (A) (7)) each<br>(7) Costumes of silk, or containing silk .. .. each<br>and in addition to the rates specified in sub-items (1) to (7) .. .. ad val.<br>or the rates imposed by sub-item (B) if higher<br>(B) Apparel, n.e.l., for the human body, partly or wholly made up including materials cut into shape therefor; also material defined by pattern or design for manufacture into apparel; secondhand apparel not imported for sale or trade and not exceeding a total value of £5 .. .. ad val.<br>(C) Corsets .. .. ad val.<br>Furs, wholly or partly made up into apparel, rugs, or other articles, n.e.l.; articles made up to imitate or substitute furs or fur trimmings .. .. ad val.<br>Furs and other Skins and Articles made thereof :—<br>(A) Apparel or Attire or other Article in part or wholly made up, including Furs or other Skins sewn together ad val.<br>Gloves (except of Rubber), viz. :—<br>(A) Harvesting, Driving, Housemaids', and Gardening ad val.<br>(B) N.E.L., including Mittens .. .. ad val. | 1s.<br>2s.<br>1s. 6d.<br>3s. 6d.<br>3s.<br>5s.<br>7s. 6d.<br>25% | 1s. 6d.<br>3s.<br>2s.<br>5s.<br>4s. 6d.<br>7s. 6d.<br>11s.<br>30% | 2s.<br>4s.<br>2s. 6d.<br>6s. 6d.<br>6s.<br>10s.<br>15s.<br>40% | 25%                                  |                         |                   |                   |  |
| 46              | 232 B.                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 40%<br>30%                                                       | 50%<br>40%                                                        | 55%<br>45%                                                     | ..                                   | 25%                     | 37½%              | 25%               |  |
| 47              | 112 (A) A.                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | ..                                                               | ..                                                                | ..                                                             | ..                                   | 25%                     | 37½%              | 25%<br>37½%       |  |
| 48              | 113 A.                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 40%<br>25%<br>10%                                                | 50%<br>35%<br>15%                                                 | 55%<br>40%<br>25%                                              | 25%                                  | 25%<br>25%<br>10%       | 40%<br>40%<br>40% | 25%<br>25%<br>25% |  |

## SCHEDULE—continued.

| Consecutive No.                    | Tariff Item Nos.—<br>A.—Australian.<br>B.—New Zealand.<br>C.—Special. | Item.                                                                                                                                                     | AUSTRALIA.                    |                    |          |                                                           | NEW ZEALAND.                  |                    |          |                                          |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|----------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|----------|------------------------------------------|
|                                    |                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                           | Present Duties.<br>Tariff.    |                    |          | Proposed Duties<br>against<br>New Zealand.                | Present Duties.<br>Tariff.    |                    |          | Proposed Duties<br>against<br>Australia. |
|                                    |                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                           | British<br>Prefer-<br>ential. | Inter-<br>mediate. | General. |                                                           | British<br>Prefer-<br>ential. | Inter-<br>mediate. | General. |                                          |
| APPAREL AND TEXTILES—continued.    |                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                           |                               |                    |          |                                                           |                               |                    |          |                                          |
| 49                                 | C.                                                                    | Blankets, Blanketing, Shawls, and Rugs of wool or containing wool .. .. .                                                                                 | 25%                           | 30%                | 40%      | 25%                                                       | 20%                           | 30%                | 35%      | 25%                                      |
| 50                                 | B.                                                                    | Hats, and Caps, in any stage of manufacture, n.e.i., including Hathoods n.e.i. .. .. .                                                                    | ..                            | ..                 | ..       | 30%                                                       | 25%                           | 35%                | 40%      | 30%                                      |
| 51                                 | A.                                                                    | Hats, viz.:—<br>(B) Wool Felt Hats, in any stage of manufacture .. .. .                                                                                   | ..                            | ..                 | ..       | 30%                                                       | 25%                           | 35%                | 40%      | 30%                                      |
|                                    |                                                                       | (C) Fur Felt Hats, in any stage of manufacture .. .. .                                                                                                    | 15a.                          | 20s.               | 25s.     | 30%                                                       | 15a.                          | 20s.               | 25s.     | 30%                                      |
|                                    |                                                                       | which ever rate returns the higher duty or ad val. .. .. .                                                                                                | 35%                           | 40%                | 45%      | ad val.                                                   | 35%                           | 40%                | 45%      | ad val.                                  |
|                                    |                                                                       | (C) Fur Felt Hats, in any stage of manufacture .. .. .                                                                                                    | 24s.                          | 30s.               | 36s.     | 30%                                                       | 24s.                          | 30s.               | 36s.     | 30%                                      |
|                                    |                                                                       | which ever rate returns the higher duty or ad val. .. .. .                                                                                                | 35%                           | 40%                | 45%      | ad val.                                                   | 35%                           | 40%                | 45%      | ad val.                                  |
| 52                                 | B.                                                                    | Millinery of all kinds, including Trimmed Hats, Caps, and Bonnets .. .. .                                                                                 | 8s.                           | 10s.               | 12s.     | 30%                                                       | 8s.                           | 10s.               | 12s.     | 30%                                      |
|                                    | A.                                                                    | Hats, Caps, and Bonnets:—<br>(D) Caps and Sewn Hats, n.e.i. .. .. .                                                                                       | 35%                           | 40%                | 45%      | ad val.                                                   | 35%                           | 40%                | 45%      | ad val.                                  |
|                                    |                                                                       | which ever rate returns the higher duty or ad val. .. .. .                                                                                                | 35%                           | 40%                | 45%      | ad val.                                                   | 35%                           | 40%                | 45%      | ad val.                                  |
|                                    |                                                                       | (E) Hats and Bonnets of all descriptions and materials, n.e.i., including Forms, Shapes, and Frames, n.e.i. .. .. .                                       | 35%                           | 40%                | 45%      | ad val.                                                   | 35%                           | 40%                | 45%      | ad val.                                  |
| LEATHER AND LEATHER MANUFACTURES.— |                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                           |                               |                    |          |                                                           |                               |                    |          |                                          |
| 53                                 | B.                                                                    | Leather n.e.i.; Belts, not being apparel, and Belting, wholly or partly composed of leather .. .. .                                                       | ..                            | ..                 | ..       | 15% or 3d. per lb. whichever rate returns the higher duty | 15%                           | 20%                | 25%      | 15% or 3d. per lb.                       |
|                                    |                                                                       | which ever rate returns the higher duty or ad val. .. .. .                                                                                                | ..                            | ..                 | ..       | ad val.                                                   | ..                            | ..                 | ..       | ad val.                                  |
| 54                                 | A.                                                                    | Leather, viz.:—<br>(C) (3) Calf, other than Patent and Enamelled .. .. .<br>(4) N.E.I., other than Patent and Enamelled .. .. .<br>(D) Belt Butts .. .. . | 25%                           | 30%                | 35%      | ad val.                                                   | 25%                           | 30%                | 35%      | ad val.                                  |
|                                    |                                                                       | which ever rate returns the higher duty or ad val. .. .. .                                                                                                | 25%                           | 30%                | 35%      | ad val.                                                   | 25%                           | 30%                | 35%      | ad val.                                  |



## SCHEDULE—continued.

| Consecutive No.                             | Tariff Item Nos.—<br>A.—Australian.<br>B.—New Zealand.<br>C.—Special. | Item.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | AUSTRALIA.                    |                    |                                            |                                                            | NEW ZEALAND.                  |                    |                                             |            |
|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------------------|------------|
|                                             |                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Present Duties.<br>Tariff.    |                    | Proposed Duties<br>against<br>New Zealand. |                                                            | Present Duties.<br>Tariff.    |                    | Proposed<br>Duties<br>against<br>Australia. |            |
|                                             |                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | British<br>Prefer-<br>ential. | Inter-<br>mediate. | General.                                   |                                                            | British<br>Prefer-<br>ential. | Inter-<br>mediate. | General.                                    |            |
| LEATHER AND LEATHER MANUFACTURES—continued. |                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                               |                    |                                            |                                                            |                               |                    |                                             |            |
| 55                                          | 323 A.                                                                | Leather Belting .. .. .                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | 30%                           | 35%                | 40%                                        | 15% or ad. per lb., whichever rate returns the higher duty |                               |                    |                                             |            |
| 56                                          | 325 (A)                                                               | Leather Manufactures, n.e.i.; Leather cut into shape; Harness n.e.i.; Razor Stropps; Whips, including handles, keepers, thongs and lashes .. .. .                                                                                       | 35%                           | 40%                | 45%                                        | 25%<br>20%<br>ad val.                                      | 25%<br>20%                    | 37½%<br>30%        | 45%<br>35%                                  | 35%<br>20% |
| 57                                          | 325 (B)                                                               | Harness and Buggy Saddles .. .. .                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 7s.<br>35%                    | 7s. 6d.<br>40%     | 8s.<br>45%                                 |                                                            |                               |                    |                                             |            |
| 58                                          | 247 B.                                                                | Leather Laces; Vamps, and Uppers; Leather cut into shapes; Clog and Patten Soles; Leather Leggings .. .. .                                                                                                                              | ..                            | ..                 | ..                                         | ..                                                         | 25%                           | 30%                | 35%                                         | 35%        |
| 59                                          | 206 B.                                                                | Saddlery, Harness, Whips, and Whipthongs .. .. .                                                                                                                                                                                        | ..                            | ..                 | ..                                         | ..                                                         | 25%                           | 30%                | 35%                                         | 35%        |
| 60                                          | 267 B.                                                                | Leather Bags, Leather Cloth Bags, Attache Cases, and the like receptacles, n.e.i. (not including Basketware, Wickerware, or similar receptacles) .. .. .                                                                                | ..                            | ..                 | ..                                         | ..                                                         | 20%                           | 30%                | 35%                                         | 25%        |
| 61                                          | 268 B.                                                                | Portmanteaux; Trunks; Travelling-Bags, Brief-Bags of leather or leathercloth, Attache Cases, Suit Cases, and similar receptacles, 10 inches in length and upwards (not including Basketware, Wickerware or similar receptacles) .. .. . | ..                            | ..                 | ..                                         | ..                                                         | 25%                           | 35%                | 40%                                         | 30%        |
| 62                                          | 269 B.                                                                | Leather Manufactures, not being articles of apparel, n.e.i. .. .. .                                                                                                                                                                     | ..                            | ..                 | ..                                         | ..                                                         | 20%                           | 30%                | 35%                                         | 25%        |
| 63                                          | .. C.                                                                 | Leather Bags, Cases, Trunks, Portmanteaux, Purses, Wallets, Hand Bags, Purse Bags, Companions, Reticules, Satchels, or Valises, with or without fittings .. .. .                                                                        | 35%<br>..                     | 40%<br>1s.         | 50%<br>1s. 6d.                             | 25%                                                        |                               |                    |                                             |            |
| 64                                          | .. C.                                                                 | Camera Covers and Cases of Leather .. .. .                                                                                                                                                                                              | ..                            | ..                 | ..                                         | 25%                                                        | 20%                           | 30%                | 35%                                         | 25%        |
| 65                                          | 250 B.                                                                | Boots, Shoes, Clogs, Pattens, Slippers, Shoettes, Sandals, Goloshes, Overshoes, and other footwear, n.e.i. .. .. .                                                                                                                      | ..                            | ..                 | ..                                         | ..                                                         | 25%                           | 37½%               | 45%                                         | 35%        |

## SCHEDULE—continued.

| Consecutive No. | Tariff Item Nos.—<br>A.—Australian.<br>B.—New Zealand.<br>C.—Special. | Item.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | AUSTRALIA.               |                              |                                      | NEW ZEALAND.                 |                         |                                    |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------------|
|                 |                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Present Duties. Tariff.  |                              | Proposed Duties against New Zealand. | Present Duties. Tariff.      |                         | Proposed Duties against Australia. |
|                 |                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | British Preferential.    | Inter-mediate. General.      |                                      | British Preferential.        | Inter-mediate. General. |                                    |
| 66              | 329 A.                                                                | LEATHER AND LEATHER MANUFACTURES—continued.<br>Boots, Shoes, Slippers, Clogs, Pattens, and other footwear (of any material), n.e.i.; Boot and Shoe Uppers and Tops; Leather Socks or Soles, n.e.i. .. .. ad val.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 35%                      | 40%                          | 45%                                  | 35%                          |                         |                                    |
| 67              | 240 A.                                                                | EARTHENWARE—<br>Mosaic Flooring; Tiles of all kinds and materials; Sheets and Roofing Slates composed of cement and asbestos or of similar materials; Articles n.e.i., composed wholly or in chief value of cement or of cement and asbestos, including articles of reinforced cement .. .. ad val.<br>Flooring, wall, hearth, and garden tiles .. .. ad val.<br>Roofing-tiles, ridging, and finials, glass, and earthen; <i>sheets</i> , plain or corrugated, roofing slates and tiles, ridging, and finials, composed of cement and asbestos or of similar materials; plaster-pulp sheets, plain and unornamental .. .. ad val. | 25%<br>..<br>..          | 30%<br>..<br>..              | 35%<br>..<br>..                      | 20%<br>..<br>..              | 30%<br>35%              | 20%                                |
| 68<br>69        | 296<br>297 B.                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | ..<br>..<br>..           | ..<br>..<br>..               | ..<br>..<br>..                       | ..<br>..<br>..               | 10%<br>15%              | 20%                                |
| 70              | C.                                                                    | TIMBER—<br>Timber, rough sawn, being the produce of Australia .. .. per 100 sup. feet                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | ..<br>..<br>..           | ..<br>..<br>..               | ..<br>..<br>..                       | 2s.<br>2s.                   | 2s.                     | Free                               |
| 71              | C.                                                                    | Timber, rough sawn, being the produce of New Zealand—<br>In sizes of 12 inches x 6 inches (or its equivalent) and over .. .. per 100 sup. feet<br>In sizes of 7 inches x 2½ inches (or its equivalent) and upwards, and less than 12 inches x 6 inches (or its equivalent) .. .. per 100 sup. feet<br>In sizes less than 7 inches x 2½ inches (or its equivalent) .. .. per 100 sup. feet<br>For the manufacture of boxes .. .. per 100 sup. feet                                                                                                                                                                                 | 3s.<br>3s.<br>5s.<br>1s. | 3s.<br>4s. 6d.<br>6s.<br>1s. | 4s.<br>5s. 6d.<br>7s.<br>1s.         | Free<br>Free<br>Free<br>Free | 2s.<br>2s.              |                                    |



**SCHEDULE—continued.**

| Consecutive No. | Tariff Item Nos.—<br>A.—Australasian.<br>B.—New Zealand.<br>C.—Special. | Item.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | AUSTRALIA.              |                |                                      | NEW ZEALAND.                     |                         |                                    |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------------|
|                 |                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Present Duties. Tariff. |                | Proposed Duties against New Zealand. | Present Duties. Tariff.          |                         | Proposed Duties against Australia. |
|                 |                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | British Preferential.   | Inter-mediate. |                                      | British Preferential.            | Inter-mediate.          |                                    |
| 72              | 292 (H)                                                                 | A. Timber.— <i>continued</i> .<br>Timber, viz.:—<br>(H) Picture and Room Mouldings .. .. ad val.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 30%                     | 45%            | 25%                                  |                                  |                         |                                    |
| 73              | 325                                                                     | B. Mouldings, in the piece, and panels, composed wholly of wood, suited for picture-frames, cornices, walls, or ceilings .. .. ad val.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | ..                      | ..             | ..                                   | 20%                              | 30%                     | 25%                                |
| 74              | 369                                                                     | B. Paper bags, all kinds, n.e.i. .. .. ad val.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | ..                      | ..             | ..                                   | 25%                              | 35%                     | 30%                                |
| 75              | 334 (G) (3)                                                             | A. Paper (G) (3) Bags, n.e.i. .. ..<br>which ever rate returns the higher duty                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 12s. 30%                | 14s. 40%       | 30% ad val.                          |                                  |                         |                                    |
| 76              | 359                                                                     | B. <i>Wrapping paper</i> , all kinds, glazed, mill-glazed, or unglazed, including browns, caps, casings, sulphites, sugars and all other bag papers, candle carton paper, tissues, and tinfoil paper, not printed, n.e.i., viz.: In sheets not less than 20 inches by 15½ inches or the equivalent, or in rolls not less than 10 inches wide .. ..<br>or ad val. which ever rate returns the higher duty | 8s. 9s. 10s. ..         | ..             | 6s. ..                               | 5s. 20%                          | 7s. 6d. 30% 8s. 9d. 35% | 6s.                                |
| 77              | 405                                                                     | B. IRON AND STEEL.—<br>Knees, bends, elbows, junction and inspection boxes and covers, and other <i>fittings</i> , n.e.i., of cast-iron, for pipes tubes and tubing exceeding 3 inches in internal diameter per ton                                                                                                                                                                                      | 48s. 10%                | 80s. 20%       | 30% ad val. 4s. 6d. per cwt. 25%     | 20% ad val. 3s. 6d. per cwt. 20% | 30% 35% 5s. 4s. 6d. 30% | 30% ad val. 4s. 6d. per cwt. 25%   |
| 78              | 406                                                                     | B. Lead Piping and Composition Piping .. .. ad val.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | 10%                     | 15%            | 25%                                  | 20%                              | 30%                     | 25%                                |
| 79              | 409                                                                     | B. Coil Pipes .. .. ad val.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | 30%                     | 35%            | 25%                                  | 20%                              | 30%                     | 25%                                |
| 80              | 414                                                                     | B. Boilers, land, and marine: Feedwater economizers n.e.i.; Steam Superheaters .. ad val.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 27½%                    | 40%            | 40%                                  | 20%                              | 35%                     | 35%                                |
| 81              | 418                                                                     | B. Gas Engines and Oil Engines, n.e.i.:<br>Not exceeding 100 brake horse power .. .. ad val.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 27½%                    | 40%            | 15%                                  | 15%                              | 25%                     | 15%                                |





## SCHEDULE—continued.

| Consecutive No.           | Tariff Item Nos.—<br>A.—Australian.<br>B.—New Zealand.<br>C.—Special. | Item. | AUSTRALIA.                                                                               |                   |                   | Proposed Duties against New Zealand. | NEW ZEALAND.            |                   |                   | Proposed Duties against Australia. |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------------------------|
|                           |                                                                       |       | Present Duties. Tariff.                                                                  |                   |                   |                                      | Present Duties. Tariff. |                   |                   |                                    |
|                           |                                                                       |       | British Preferential.                                                                    | Inter-mediate.    | General.          |                                      | British Preferential.   | Inter-mediate.    | General.          |                                    |
| IRON AND STEEL—continued. |                                                                       |       |                                                                                          |                   |                   |                                      |                         |                   |                   |                                    |
| 88                        | 450                                                                   | B.    | 27½%<br>35%                                                                              | 35%<br>40%        | 40%<br>45%        | 25%                                  | 20%                     | 30%               | 35%               | 25%                                |
| 89                        | 453                                                                   | B.    |                                                                                          |                   |                   |                                      |                         |                   |                   |                                    |
| 90                        | 454                                                                   | B.    | 27½%                                                                                     | 35%               | 40%               | 25%                                  | 20%                     | 30%               | 35%               | 25%                                |
| 91                        | 456                                                                   | B.    | 27½%                                                                                     | 35%               | 40%               | 25%                                  | 20%                     | 30%               | 35%               | 25%                                |
| 92                        | ..                                                                    | C.    | 27½%<br>27½%                                                                             | 35%<br>35%        | 40%<br>40%        | 25%<br>25%                           | 20%<br>20%              | 30%<br>30%        | 35%<br>35%        | 25%<br>25%                         |
| 93                        | 460                                                                   | B.    |                                                                                          |                   |                   |                                      |                         |                   |                   |                                    |
| 94                        | 462                                                                   | B.    | 27½%                                                                                     | 35%               | 40%               | 25%                                  | 20%                     | 30%               | 35%               | 25%                                |
| 95                        | 468                                                                   | B.    | 27½%                                                                                     | 35%               | 40%               | 25%                                  | 20%                     | 30%               | 35%               | 25%                                |
| 96                        | ..                                                                    | C.    | 27½%                                                                                     | 35%               | 40%               | 25%                                  | 20%                     | 30%               | 35%               | 25%                                |
| 97                        | 470                                                                   | B.    | 35%                                                                                      | 40%               | 45%               | 25%                                  | 20%                     | 30%               | 35%               | 25%                                |
| 98                        | 471                                                                   | C.    | 12½%<br>27½%<br>27½%                                                                     | 20%<br>35%<br>35% | 25%<br>40%<br>40% | 25%<br>40%<br>40%                    | 20%<br>30%<br>30%       | 30%<br>40%<br>40% | 35%<br>40%<br>40% | 25%<br>40%<br>40%                  |
| 99                        | 472                                                                   | B.    | 27½%                                                                                     | 35%               | 40%               | 25%                                  | 20%                     | 30%               | 35%               | 25%                                |
| 100                       | 484                                                                   | B.    | 27½%                                                                                     | 35%               | 40%               | 25%                                  | 20%                     | 30%               | 35%               | 25%                                |
| 101                       | 487                                                                   | B.    | Free                                                                                     | 5%                | 10%               | Free                                 | 20%                     | 30%               | 35%               | 25%                                |
|                           |                                                                       | A.    | 1s.<br>2d.                                                                               | 1s. 6d.<br>3d.    | 2s.<br>4d.        | 25%<br>ad val.                       | 25%<br>ad val.          | 35%<br>ad val.    | 40%<br>ad val.    | 25%<br>ad val.                     |
|                           |                                                                       |       | per block of six square inches and under<br>for every square inch over six square inches |                   |                   |                                      |                         |                   |                   |                                    |

per block of six square inches and under  
for every square inch over six square inches

## SCHEDULE—continued.

| Consecutive No.                  | Tariff Item Nos.—<br>A.—Australian.<br>B.—New Zealand.<br>C.—Special. | Item.                                                                                                                        | AUSTRALIA.                    |                    |                                            | NEW ZEALAND.                  |                    |                                          |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------------------|
|                                  |                                                                       |                                                                                                                              | Present Duties.<br>Tariff.    |                    | Proposed Duties<br>against<br>New Zealand. | Present Duties.<br>Tariff.    |                    | Proposed Duties<br>against<br>Australia. |
|                                  |                                                                       |                                                                                                                              | British<br>Prefer-<br>ential. | Inter-<br>mediate. | General.                                   | British<br>Prefer-<br>ential. | Inter-<br>mediate. | General.                                 |
| <b>IRON AND STEEL—continued.</b> |                                                                       |                                                                                                                              |                               |                    |                                            |                               |                    |                                          |
| 102                              | 515                                                                   | B. Lead-headed Nails, and Galvanized Roofing-nails .. .. .                                                                   | 5s. 6d.<br>25%                | 6s. 6d.<br>30%     | 8s.<br>35%                                 | 20%                           | 30%                | 35%                                      |
| 103                              | 516                                                                   | B. C. Iron and other Nails, n.e.i., including Dog-spikes but not including Horse-shoe Nails .. .. .                          | 5s. 6d.<br>25%                | 6s. 6d.<br>30%     | 8s.<br>35%                                 | £2 per ton                    | £3 per ton         | £4 per ton                               |
| 104                              | 530                                                                   | B. Gas-ranges, Heaters, Rings, and Grinders, and similar Gas Heating and Cooking Appliances .. .. .                          | 35%                           | 40%                | 45%                                        | 25%                           | 35%                | 40%                                      |
| 105                              | ..                                                                    | C. Upholsterers' spiral sofa-springs .. .. .                                                                                 | 35%                           | 40%                | 45%                                        | 20%                           | 30%                | 35%                                      |
| 106                              | 541                                                                   | B. Valves, taps, tobies, hydrants, and similar articles, n.e.i. .. .. .                                                      | 35%                           | 40%                | 45%                                        | 20%                           | 30%                | 35%                                      |
| 107                              | 192                                                                   | A. Brasswork Bronzework and Gunmetal work for general engineering and plumbing, and other trades .. .. .                     | 35%                           | 40%                | 45%                                        | 20%                           | 30%                | 35%                                      |
| 108                              | 191                                                                   | A. Metal Bedsteads, Cots, Fenders, and Fire-irons .. .. .                                                                    | 35%                           | 40%                | 45%                                        | 20%                           | 30%                | 35%                                      |
| 109                              | 544                                                                   | P. Galvanized-iron manufactures, n.e.i., made up from Galvanized iron, or from plain sheet iron, and then galvanized .. .. . | 35%                           | 40%                | 45%                                        | 25%                           | 37½%               | 40%                                      |
| 110                              | 545                                                                   | B. Japanned and Lacquered Metalware .. .. .                                                                                  | 35%                           | 40%                | 45%                                        | 25%                           | 37½%               | 40%                                      |
| 111                              | 546                                                                   | B. Tinware, and Tin Manufactures, n.e.i. .. .. .                                                                             | 35%                           | 40%                | 45%                                        | 25%                           | 37½%               | 40%                                      |
| <b>VEHICLES—</b>                 |                                                                       |                                                                                                                              |                               |                    |                                            |                               |                    |                                          |
| 112                              | 552                                                                   | B. Carriages, Carts, Drays, Waggons, Perambulators, and the like Vehicles, and Wheels for the same .. .. .                   | 35%                           | 45%                | 55%                                        | 20%                           | 30%                | 35%                                      |
| 113                              | 553                                                                   | B. Cars, Waggons, and Trucks, Railway and Tramway .. .. .                                                                    | 35%                           | 45%                | 55%                                        | 20%                           | 30%                | 35%                                      |
| 114                              | 150                                                                   | B. PAINTS, OILS, AND VARNISHES—<br>Eucalyptus Oil .. .. .                                                                    | Free                          | Free               | 10%                                        | 20%                           | 20%                | Free                                     |



SCHEDULE—continued.

| Consecutive No. | Tariff Item Nos.—<br>A.—Australian.<br>B.—New Zealand.<br>C.—Special. | Item.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | AUSTRALIA.                    |                    |                                            | NEW ZEALAND.                  |                    |                                          |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------------------|
|                 |                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Present Duties.<br>Tariff.    |                    | Proposed Duties<br>against<br>New Zealand. | Present Duties.<br>Tariff.    |                    | Proposed Duties<br>against<br>Australia. |
|                 |                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | British<br>Prefer-<br>ential. | Inter-<br>mediate. | General.                                   | British<br>Prefer-<br>ential. | Inter-<br>mediate. | General.                                 |
|                 |                                                                       | <b>PAINTS, OILS, AND VARNISHES—continued.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                               |                    |                                            |                               |                    |                                          |
|                 |                                                                       | Oils in vessels, capable of containing 1 gallon or more, viz.:—<br>Linseed Oil; Linseed Oil in admixture with any other oil or<br>oils, according to any standard which may on importation<br>or from time to time be prescribed by the Minister per gal.                                                                                |                               |                    |                                            |                               |                    |                                          |
|                 |                                                                       | Oils in vessels exceeding 1 gallon—(F)(2) Linseed .. per gal.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | 9d.                           | 1s.                | 1s.                                        | 9d.                           | 9d.                | 1s.                                      |
|                 |                                                                       | Paints, and Colours, ground in liquid, n.e.i.; Paints mixed<br>ready for use; Enamel Paints; Ships' Antifouling Composi-<br>tion; <i>Paint Thinners</i> , n.e.i.; <i>Driers</i> , n.e.i.; <i>Kalsomine</i> ,<br>Distempers, and similar preparations, in powder form                                                                     | Various                       | Various            | Various                                    | 15%<br>ad val.                | 20%<br>ad val.     | 25%<br>ad val.                           |
|                 |                                                                       | Putty .. .. .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | 2s.                           | 2s. 6d.            | 3s.                                        | 3s. 6d.                       | 4s. 6d.            | 5s.                                      |
|                 |                                                                       | Varnishes .. .. .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Various                       | Various            | Various                                    | 15%<br>ad val.                | 20%<br>ad val.     | 25%<br>ad val.                           |
|                 |                                                                       | Lacquers; Brunswick Black; Japans: Litho-<br>graphic varnishes; Printers' Ink Reducer; <i>Terebintine</i> ; gold<br>size; Liquid Stains for wood; Metallic Paints; and Liquid<br>Medium for mixing with the same; Petrifying Liquids suited<br>for waterproofing concrete, plaster, and similar surfaces, or<br>for use as paint .. .. . | Various                       | Various            | Various                                    | 15%<br>ad val.                | 20%<br>ad val.     | 25%<br>ad val.                           |
|                 |                                                                       | <b>MISCELLANEOUS—</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                               |                    |                                            |                               |                    |                                          |
|                 |                                                                       | Brushes, Brushware, and Brooms, including Knots or Tufts for<br>Brushmaking .. .. .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | 30%                           | 35%                | 45%                                        | 25%                           | 37½%               | 45%                                      |
|                 |                                                                       | Cordage, Rope, and Twine, n.e.i. (excepting Reaper and Binder<br>Twine and Yarn) .. .. .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | 30%                           | 35%                | 40%                                        | 20%                           | 30%                | 35%                                      |
|                 |                                                                       | Reaper and Binder Twine and Yarn .. .. .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | 6s.                           | 7s.                | 7s.                                        | 20%<br>ad val.                | 30%                | 35%                                      |
|                 |                                                                       | Carbonic Acid Gas, including the liquefied or compressed gas<br>per lb.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 2d.                           | 2½d.               | 3d.                                        | 1d.                           | 2d.                | 3d.                                      |

## SCHEDULE—continued.

| Consecutive N. | Tariff Item Nos.—<br>A.—Australian.<br>B.—New Zealand.<br>C.—Special. | Item.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | AUSTRALIA.              |                |          |                                      | NEW ZEALAND.            |                |          |                                    |
|----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|----------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|----------|------------------------------------|
|                |                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Present Duties. Tariff. |                |          | Proposed Duties against New Zealand. | Present Duties. Tariff. |                |          | Proposed Duties against Australia. |
|                |                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | British Preferential.   | Inter-mediate. | General. |                                      | British Preferential.   | Inter-mediate. | General. |                                    |
| 124            | 629 B.                                                                | Gelatine, and Glue .. .. .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 2d.                     | 3d.            | 4d.      | 20%                                  | 20%                     | 30%            | 35%      | 20%                                |
| 125            | 321 B.<br>314 A.<br>315 A.<br>197 (A) A.<br>132 B.<br>269 (A) A.      | which ever rate returns the higher duty<br>Jewellery; plate, gold or silver; plated ware .. .. .<br>Jewellery, rolled gold and imitation .. .. .<br>Jewellery, n.s.i., and plate, gold or silver .. .. .<br>Plated ware .. .. .<br>Sheep-dip .. .. .<br>Sheep, Cattle, and Horse Washes, in liquid or powder form .. .. .                            | 20%                     | 30%            | 35%      | 20%                                  | 20%                     | 30%            | 35%      | 20%                                |
| 126            |                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | 45%                     | 55%            | 60%      | ..                                   | 20%                     | 30%            | 35%      | 25%                                |
| 127            |                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | 40%                     | 50%            | 55%      | 25%                                  | Free                    | 5%             | 10%      | Free                               |
| 128            | .. C.                                                                 | Ships which are to the satisfaction of the Minister of Customs of Australia, <i>bona fide</i> owned and registered in New Zealand, when employed in Australian waters for the replacement of New Zealand owned and registered ships, or for any other purpose as approved by the Minister for any continuous period not exceeding six months .. .. . | 25%                     | 25%            | 35%      | Free                                 | Free                    | Free           | Free     | Free                               |
| 129            | .. C.                                                                 | Ships .. .. .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Various                 | Various        | Various  | Free                                 | Free                    | Free           | Free     | Free                               |
| 130            | ..                                                                    | All other goods being the produce or manufacture of Australia or of New Zealand, at the rates applicable to goods being the produce or manufacture of the United Kingdom, upon entry into New Zealand or Australia respectively.                                                                                                                     | ..                      | ..             | ..       | ..                                   | ..                      | ..             | ..       | ..                                 |



There is a general opinion that the trading relations between the Commonwealth and New Zealand should not remain where they are to-day, the products of both countries being in the general list of the respective Tariff schedules; that is to say, neither country enjoys the benefit of preferential treatment. This is a most anomalous position, and one which the Governments of both countries felt should be rectified at the earliest possible opportunity. It will be remembered that this question of reciprocal tariff treatment between the two countries engaged the attention of both Parliaments as far back as 1906, but the attempt then made to arrive at an agreement proved abortive. Prior to an amendment of the New Zealand Tariff towards the end of last year, the Commonwealth did enjoy British preferential treatment, but following on the determination of the New Zealand Government to encourage the development of secondary industries, a substantial increase in Customs duties was made towards the end of last year. In order that the Commonwealth might be in a position to negotiate with New Zealand in regard to tariff treatment, my predecessor at the Customs Department (Mr. Greene) passed through this House an enabling Bill, and had those negotiations been successful, we should automatically have been able to make operative the British preferential tariff for New Zealand goods. The Commonwealth Government offered the Dominion preference on this scale, and in turn asked for similar treatment. In other words, we made an offer to the New Zealand Minister that there should be mutual exchange on the basis of British preference, but New Zealand was unable to accept the offer. We were therefore faced with the necessity to negotiate item by item up to a certain stage. Two lists have been prepared, one in respect of which it was necessary we should negotiate or bargain, and the second the items in respect of which New Zealand was prepared to offer the Commonwealth British preferential tariff rates. These negotiations extended over a period of three weeks, during which a close investigation was made of the position as between the two countries by the New Zealand Minister, who was accompanied by the Comptroller of Customs of the Dominion; and by the Commonwealth Minister, with the able assistance of members of the newly-created Tariff Board. These negotiations involved a considerable

amount of investigation and detail work in the way of analysis and comparisons, which honorable members would do well to bear in mind if, in the examination of the schedule, they find certain items in respect of which they feel that the Commonwealth has not secured that measure of protection they would like. New Zealand, of course, has a perfect right to aim at the development of her secondary industries, and the agreement arrived at is the best that could be obtained in the circumstances. The conditions of the two countries are similar in many respects. New Zealand, like the Commonwealth of Australia, is a primary producing country that has recently turned its attention to the development of her secondary industries, whereas the Commonwealth, having been longer in the field of secondary production, has advanced much farther along that path of development. In view of the fact that the policy of the New Zealand Government is to secure the development of secondary industries in the Dominion, it could not be expected that a one-sided bargain should emerge from the negotiations. The principle of give and take had to be the foundation of any such agreement, which, to be equitable, must be mutually advantageous. I claim that the agreement has greatly improved the position of Australia with the sister Dominion. Copies of the agreement and Tariff schedule are being placed before the New Zealand Parliament to-day. I do not propose to go through the schedule item by item, or to deal with the subject in an itemized way, because the schedule is self explanatory, and honorable members will have a full opportunity, at a later stage, to deal with it. We set out to obtain the best agreement possible for the Commonwealth, and recognised, of course, that the representatives of the sister Dominion were perfectly right in attempting to achieve the same object. This agreement and the Tariff schedule are the result, and I ask honorable members not to jeopardize the position by insisting upon dealing with the schedule item by item at this stage.

MR. WATT.—Are we to understand that all the unspecified items in the schedule will get British Tariff rates in both countries?

MR. RODGERS.—Yes. The schedule may be classified in the following way:—Item 1a represents the bargained items, and item 1b the list of items upon which

British preference is granted to Australia by New Zealand. The concluding item of the schedule is comprehensive and covers all unspecified items.

Mr. WATT.—Was it not possible to get complete columnar reciprocity of British preference?

Mr. RODGERS.—No. I mentioned that, following on the provisions made in this Chamber by the passage of the Customs Tariff (New Zealand Preference) Act last year, the Customs Department first proposed to New Zealand a mutual exchange of British preference on all items. That was not acceptable to the New Zealand Minister, and there was no alternative but to make a bargaining arrangement, which involved the preparation of schedules of items in respect of which both countries desired a beneficial arrangement. Agreement having been reached in regard to them, for the items remaining unspecified we obtained British preference. Honorable members must bear in mind that Australia has a higher Protective policy than has New Zealand. Therefore, the British preference in the schedules of the two countries differs. Accordingly I made an offer to the New Zealand Minister that, for the purpose of a mutual exchange of British preference, we would be prepared to accept the New Zealand standard. I pressed strongly that this arrangement should be adopted by the Dominion as a reasonable basis on which to establish our trade relationship, and that it should cover the whole range of trade between the two countries. That offer, however, was refused. Therefore, we had to conclude an agreement on the best terms that New Zealand would give us. In asking honorable members to accept this arrangement *in globo*, I ask them also to believe that I, assisted by the Tariff Board, endeavoured to get the best bargain possible for the Commonwealth. And what could be got from New Zealand better than the best it was prepared to give us? We have concluded an agreement with the Dominion, and I hope the House will recognise the value to the nation of accepting the agreement *in globo*, as representing the best terms that can be obtained from the Dominion. If the House insists upon dealing with the schedule item by item, a re-opening of the negotiations will

be necessitated, and there will be a possibility of the loss of some of the concessions already made to us.

Mr. FENTON.—Does the Minister suggest that we should shut our eyes and open our mouths, and swallow the lot?

Mr. WATT.—How can we make a reciprocal arrangement unless it is taken as a whole?

Mr. FENTON.—Our Protection can be whittled away by that means.

Mr. RODGERS.—As the honorable member for Maribyrnong has not had time to examine the schedule, he is talking at random. What can be better than the best? The best that can be got from New Zealand is represented in the schedule presented to the House, and it is the result of weeks and weeks of bargaining and careful analysis. I ask honorable members to recollect that there are in New Zealand people as keen on the development of Dominion industries as honorable members in this House are keen on developing Commonwealth industries, and only in a spirit of reciprocity can any arrangement be arrived at. If we are to establish a policy of preference, which I hope will extend throughout the Empire—

Mr. FENTON.—To India, too?

Mr. RODGERS.—Throughout the Empire, I hope that preference to products of the British Empire will be the policy that will prevail in the future. During the testing period of war we were able to rightly gauge the value of that policy, and I venture to say that the effort, particularly on the part of the United Kingdom, to resuscitate Europe for the sake of improved trade relationships, cannot be as advantageous to the British Empire as will be a policy of peopling the Dominions and building up Empire industries. I know of no subject of more outstanding interest than that of thus developing the Dominions, for they are the best customers of the Empire and the greatest guarantee of its preservation. Only by adopting a spirit of reasonable compromise between the Dominions is it possible to make reciprocal agreements. What means has the Commonwealth of compelling New Zealand to give us more than it is willing to give? I ask honorable members to believe that, whilst we carried on these negotiations in a spirit



of reciprocity in the hope of making a bargain fair to the two countries concerned, we also did our best to get the best deal possible for Australia, and I believe that on analysis it will be found to be a good deal.

Mr. LISTER.—In any case it is binding, is it not?

Mr. RODGERS.—It is a tentative agreement between two Ministers in behalf of their respective Governments, and is subject to ratification by the Parliaments of the two countries. If it is passed *in globo* by both Parliaments, the agreement will come into operation on a date to be proclaimed.

Mr. PRATTEN.—Has the New Zealand Parliament accepted the agreement?

Mr. RODGERS.—It is being tabled in the New Zealand Parliament concurrently with its tabling here. The New Zealand Government will have difficulty in convincing the members of the Dominion Parliament that the agreement is the best obtainable in the interests of New Zealand, just as we may have difficulties in convincing honorable members that the agreement is the best procurable in the interests of the Commonwealth, and accordingly the Dominion Government desire that the agreement may be ratified within a week. That is to say, honorable members will have a week for analysis and discussion of the schedule, which, if then adopted *in globo*, will come into operation in both countries on a date to be fixed.

In course of negotiations it was found that a grave anomaly existing between the two countries could be rectified by mutual agreement, and accordingly a tentative arrangement was made, in accordance with clause 8 of the agreement. The effect of that clause is that British goods which arrive in Australia and are subsequently transhipped to New Zealand shall not be deemed to have entered the commerce of this country, and for the purpose of transference shall not be subject to a further impost. Similar treatment will extend to goods transhipped from New Zealand to the Commonwealth. The object of that arrangement is to rectify what traders in both countries found to be a great difficulty, involving a restriction upon the ordinary exchange of trade. In future, goods which are shipped direct

from the United Kingdom to Australia, and enter under the British preferential rates, may subsequently be transhipped to New Zealand and entered as if shipped direct from the United Kingdom.

Sir ROBERT BEST.—Is not that arrangement already in operation?

Mr. RODGERS.—It is in operation, but subject to ratification by this Parliament. The New Zealand Government, however, had the necessary machinery to put the arrangement in operation immediately, without reference to Parliament. I ask the House to ratify an arrangement which is greatly to the advantage of the commercial community.

Mr. FENTON.—How does it apply to goods that are partly manufactured in Great Britain and partly manufactured elsewhere?

Mr. RODGERS.—It does not apply to anything but goods specifically scheduled for British preference.

An agreement was in existence between the New Zealand and South African Governments in respect to certain items, and one of those items is particularly affected by this reciprocal arrangement. New Zealand had made an arrangement that was very favorable to South Africa, but was greatly to the detriment of the wine industry of the Commonwealth, and that arrangement was to some extent a barrier in our negotiations. However, as evidence of good faith, New Zealand has already given notice to South Africa of the termination of that arrangement as from the 1st August next, thus enabling us to vastly improve the protection of our wine industry. Previously we were in a very bad position indeed, but through the concession made by New Zealand that has been rectified.

Whilst I do not desire to discuss the items of the schedule in detail, I must refer to dried fruits. We tried very hard to get the benefit of British preference for Australian dried fruit entering the Dominion, but I regret to say that, so far, we have not succeeded. The preferential rate has not been refused, but, so far, it has not been conceded, and further negotiations are taking place.

Mr. PRATTEN.—Does the Minister refer to citrus fruits?

Mr. RODGERS.—No; they are provided for in a way that will be very

gratifying to those engaged in the industry. There is a deferred British preference in respect to dried fruits, the full benefit of which we still hope to obtain; although I was hopeful that it might have been put into operation at the same time as other duties. This is the only item to which I desire specifically to refer. I allude to it because there is no industry in the Commonwealth which is so desirous of obtaining outside markets as is the dried fruit industry. The areas under cultivation have been extended, and the industry has gone forward by leaps and bounds.

This agreement is a very substantial advance from the position that we previously occupied. I ask honorable members, when analyzing it, in fairness to remember where Australia will stand if it be not ratified. To-day, so far as New Zealand is concerned, we are on the general list, and there we shall remain unless we make with New Zealand a bargain that is suitable to that country. That is the position that we have to face. I invite the attention of honorable members, and particularly that of the honorable member for Maribyrnong (Mr. Fenton), to the fact that, in this case, we are not moulding a Tariff of which we are the masters. By this agreement, we are entering into an arrangement that we can secure only by means of the good-will and approval of the people of New Zealand.

Mr. MAXWELL.—Does it represent, as nearly as possible, a policy of give and take?

Mr. RODGERS.—That is the whole basis of the agreement. I repeat that we are not moulding a Tariff, of which we are the sole masters. We are obtaining the best agreement that can be secured, on a reciprocal basis, with a sister Dominion, many of whose industries are like our own.

Mr. FLEMING.—Are we giving or taking more?

Mr. RODGERS.—Every one knows that the balance of trade between the Commonwealth and New Zealand is overwhelmingly in our favour. This is an older manufacturing country; it is more populous, and has had a better start than New Zealand. I claim that, on the whole, the agreement is sound; that it will advance very substantially the commercial and trading interests of the Com-

monwealth, and give to both our primary and secondary industries the best measure of help that could be obtained.

Progress reported.

## PAPERS.

The following papers were presented:—

Arbitration (Public Service) Act—Variation of Determination by the Arbitrator, &c.—No. 13 of 1922—Public Service Clerical Association.

Customs Tariff (New Zealand Preference)—Agreement between the Commonwealth and the Dominion of New Zealand.

Land Acquisition Act—Land acquired under, at—

Nobby, Queensland—For Postal purposes.  
Yeronga, Queensland—For Postal purposes.

## ELECTORAL DIVISIONS.

### REDISTRIBUTION OF VICTORIA.

Debate resumed (*vide* page 931).

Dr. EARLE PAGE.—Before the adjournment of the debate, I gave the House statistical information as to the area and enumerated population of the metropolis of Melbourne, as compared with the remainder of the State, and I want now to point out that because of a difference of 2.24 per cent. between the population of the two, the Commissioners have allotted eleven seats to the metropolitan, and only nine to the extra metropolitan districts. We find that this difference of 2.24 per cent. between the population of the metropolitan and country districts has been made a reason for giving two additional members to the metropolitan area.

Mr. FENTON.—That shows the iniquity of the formula by which the quota is secured.

Dr. EARLE PAGE.—Evidently it is wrong. I propose to quote from the report of the Commissioners in order to show the attitude they have adopted. There were in all some eight or nine series of objections put before them by different sets of local governing bodies and organizations. The Commissioners report—

We have given consideration to these objections and suggestions, and report thereon as follows:—

(a) and (b) In framing our proposals, we decided that in dividing the State into twenty divisions, we could not properly include more than nine



divisions in the extra-metropolitan areas, and that having regard to the distribution of electoral population, and the geographical and other conditions governing redistribution in that area, the divisions of Wimmera, Echuca, Wannon, Corio, Ballarat, Bendigo, Gippsland, Indi, and Flinders should be retained with additions and modifications. This necessarily involved the disappearance of the divisions of Corangamite and Grampians. . . .

That is the only explanation they offer. I should like to know the reason for such a bald statement, and why two more members should be given the metropolis because its population is 2.24 per cent. greater than that of the extra-metropolitan area. If there was no other reason at all for referring back this scheme to the Commissioners, this in itself should be sufficient, especially when we find that the condition of affairs in New South Wales is widely different. There the aim of the distribution Commissioners has been not to deprive the country districts of two additional representatives, but rather to secure for them the maximum representation that it is possible to give. The number of electors enrolled for the metropolitan divisions of New South Wales in 1921 was 543,276, and for the extra-metropolitan divisions 562,104, or a difference of less than 19,000. Yet we find that the Commissioners for that State, working on exactly the same basis that the Victorian Commissioners are presumed to have adopted, have given to the extra-metropolitan divisions, in respect of this difference of less than 19,000, representing, I suppose, not  $\frac{1}{4}$  per cent. of the total population, two additional members. There we have fifteen extra-metropolitan divisions and only thirteen city divisions. The plan adopted in New South Wales, I venture to say, is far more equitable and more in accordance with the spirit of the Representation Act than is the scheme before us. In support of this contention, one has only to refer to the figures relating to the various constituencies in the two States. In Victoria, for instance, Wannon, one of the largest country electorates, has the largest number of electors, and compact electorates in the heart of the city have the smallest number. In New South Wales the position is different. The figures are worthy of note. The number of voters

in the thirteen metropolitan divisions of New South Wales is as follows:—

|              |     |        |
|--------------|-----|--------|
| Cook         | ... | 41,308 |
| Dalley       | ... | 42,349 |
| East Sydney  | ... | 43,130 |
| Granville    | ... | 39,737 |
| Kogarah      | ... | 40,499 |
| Lang         | ... | 41,004 |
| Martin       | ... | 40,634 |
| North Sydney | ... | 41,302 |
| Parkes       | ... | 40,450 |
| South Sydney | ... | 40,895 |
| Warringah    | ... | 40,019 |
| Wentworth    | ... | 40,579 |
| West Sydney  | ... | 43,265 |

I have read the whole list so that the position may be perfectly clear to honorable members. The lowest figures are those relating to the new electorate of Granville, which has 39,737 electors. In the extra-metropolitan divisions the number of electors is as follows:—

|             |     |        |
|-------------|-----|--------|
| Calare      | ... | 37,588 |
| Cowper      | ... | 37,722 |
| Darling     | ... | 36,546 |
| Gwydir      | ... | 37,559 |
| Hume        | ... | 37,604 |
| Hunter      | ... | 38,907 |
| Macquarie   | ... | 37,758 |
| Monaro      | ... | 38,311 |
| Newcastle   | ... | 39,931 |
| New England | ... | 38,487 |
| Parramatta  | ... | 39,956 |
| Richmond    | ... | 37,737 |
| Riverina    | ... | 36,831 |
| Robertson   | ... | 37,573 |
| Werriwa     | ... | 37,699 |

The Commissioners for New South Wales, acting under the same Act and the same instructions as those under which the Victorian Commissioners are required to work, have thus brought about all for which we are asking in this amendment, and yet the Attorney-General tells us that it cannot be done.

Mr. GROOM.—And yet last night the honorable member wanted to vote out the New South Wales scheme.

Dr. EARLE PAGE.—I did not oppose this part of the scheme. It is easy to discover the profession which the honorable gentleman follows, since he tries to put words into my mouth and to attribute to me actions that were not mine. I was endeavouring last night to secure, not merely for Victoria, but for all Australia, an equitable distribution of representation in order that the spirit of the Constitution might be observed. The honorable gentleman, however, with one eye all the time on some party political advantage, seeks to attribute to others the motives by which he apparently is animated. In order to achieve his object

last night he cracked the party whip, and the suggestion was made that if the motion then under consideration were dealt with in a non-party spirit, with the result that it was lost, the House would be dissolved. There was an open threat that within eight weeks honorable members would be in their constituencies.

Mr. BELL.—An open threat? I did not hear of it.

Mr. GROOM.—The Leader of the Country party should not make such a statement unless he is sure of its accuracy.

Dr. EARLE PAGE.—I should like to have from the honorable gentleman a denial of the statement, which was openly made. Whether the threat had any official weight it is impossible for me to say. The position created by the distribution in Victoria is grossly inequitable, because some New South Wales country electorates have 8,000 fewer voters than Victorian country electorates, and yet we are asked to believe that Australia is a continent in which the principle of one vote

one value holds good. I want to point out the injury likely to be done to those people who live outside the metropolitan areas. They are people who, as I have found, fully value their rights of citizenship. Country voters in Victoria always poll a higher percentage to their enrolments than do city people, despite the disadvantages the former have in reaching polling places and the many difficulties in the way of registering their votes. A new division has been created in the metropolitan area in Victoria, and the effect has been apparently to diminish the size of metropolitan constituencies because the number of polling places in the metropolitan area is actually eleven less than it was ten years ago.

Mr. GROOM.—What does the honorable member mean by "polling places"?

Dr. EARLE PAGE.—The following figures were supplied to me by the Electoral Department this morning:—

| Existing Divisions. |                       |                        |                       | Proposed Divisions. |                       |                       |           |
|---------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------|
| Division.           | No. of Sub-divisions. | No. of Polling Places. | Area in square miles. | Division.           | No. of Sub-divisions. | No. of Polling Places | Increase. |
| Balaclava ..        | 7                     | 9                      | 7.00                  | Balaclava ..        | 6                     | 12                    |           |
| Ballaarat ..        | 20                    | 94                     | 1,297.40              | Ballaarat ..        | 23                    | 149                   | 55        |
| Batman ..           | 8                     | 10                     | 3.25                  | Batman ..           | 6                     | 11                    |           |
| Bendigo ..          | 21                    | 88                     | 1,658.87              | Bendigo ..          | 24                    | 141                   | 53        |
| Bourke ..           | 8                     | 18                     | 59.95                 | Bourke ..           | 6                     | 9                     |           |
| Corangamite ..      | 22                    | 165                    | 7,005.12              | Corio ..            | 22                    | 138                   | 24        |
| Corio ..            | 20                    | 114                    | 2,587.68              | Deakin ..           | 7                     | 8                     |           |
| Echuca ..           | 26                    | 173                    | 6,546.86              | Echuca ..           | 29                    | 218                   | 45        |
| Fawkner ..          | 6                     | 9                      | 4.40                  | Fawkner ..          | 7                     | 10                    |           |
| Flinders ..         | 18                    | 149                    | 3,122.25              | Flinders ..         | 20                    | 163                   | 14        |
| Gippsland ..        | 29                    | 222                    | 16,008.68             | Gippsland ..        | 26                    | 244                   | 22        |
| Grampians ..        | 18                    | 155                    | 4,532.96              | Henty ..            | 8                     | 22                    |           |
| Henty ..            | 12                    | 30                     | 57.78                 | Indi ..             | 36                    | 271                   | 70        |
| Indi ..             | 24                    | 201                    | 10,183.33             | Kooyong ..          | 10                    | 25                    |           |
| Kooyong ..          | 10                    | 21                     | 72.68                 | Maribyrnong ..      | 7                     | 22                    |           |
| Maribyrnong ..      | 8                     | 24                     | 84.33                 | Melbourne ..        | 12                    | 14                    |           |
| Melbourne ..        | 10                    | 12                     | 7.77                  | Melbourne Ports ..  | 8                     | 13                    |           |
| Melbourne Ports ..  | 8                     | 14                     | 17.40                 | Wannon ..           | 23                    | 192                   | 21        |
| Wannon ..           | 24                    | 171                    | 13,187.36             | Wimmera ..          | 25                    | 232                   | 16        |
| Wimmera ..          | 23                    | 216                    | 21,435.58             | Yarra ..            | 7                     | 12                    |           |
| Yarra ..            | 6                     | 11                     | 3.35                  |                     |                       |                       |           |

The net result is that there are 137 polling places under the new proposal as against 148 in the metropolitan area, whereas there are 1,748 polling places in country districts, an increase of 170.

The Commissioners' proposal for Victoria does not bear any comparison with

the New South Wales redistribution carried out under exactly the same Act and practically by officers of the same Department. Whereas there is a negligible difference between the metropolitan population of the two States, country districts in New South Wales have been given



fifteen representatives in this House as compared with thirteen given to metropolitan areas, while Victorian country districts have only nine representatives in this House as against eleven for metropolitan constituencies. We have no reason advanced by the Commissioners for adopting their redistribution, simply the bald statement that they can only give nine members for the country districts, and for that reason they find it necessary to eliminate Coranganite and Grampians. The House would be justified in sending the redistribution back to the Commissioners for revision on the sound ground that their proposals do not carry out the spirit or intention or even the letter of the Act. If this policy is continued we shall have an acceleration of the rate of the huge increase of metropolitan population that has been going on at the expense of country districts. How rapid this has been in the case of Victoria is shown by the figures I have taken from the *Victorian Year-Book* giving the percentage of metropolitan population to the total population of the State in the years mentioned—

| Year.            | Per cent. | Year.            | Per cent. |
|------------------|-----------|------------------|-----------|
| 1861 (Census) .. | 25.9      | 1914 (Estimate)  | 47.1      |
| 1871 ..          | 28.9      | 1915 ..          | 48.2      |
| 1881 ..          | 32.8      | 1916 ..          | 49.7      |
| 1891 ..          | 43.0      | 1917 ..          | 50.2      |
| 1901 ..          | 41.3      | 1918 ..          | 50.6      |
| 1911 ..          | 45.1      | 1919 ..          | 49.7      |
| 1912 (Estimate)  | 45.7      | 1920 ..          | 50.4      |
| 1913 ..          | 46.1      | 1921 (Census) .. | 51.1      |

The only way in which a continued acceleration of that rate can be avoided is by insuring that the legislative weight of country districts is greater in the future than it has been in the past, and by securing the return to Parliament of country district representatives who are thoroughly informed upon local problems, and who, knowing where the "shoe pinches," may be able to bring forward those ameliorative measures which are so necessary for the purpose of encouraging not only people on country lands, but also those who are engaged in industries in country towns. We should have as many of these men as possible in Parliament. Since I have been in this Na-

tional Parliament the great difficulty that country constituents have of getting in touch with their representatives has been impressed upon me. In many cases, before they can reach Melbourne they are obliged to travel hundreds of miles to their State capitals to get a through train or boat to the Federal Seat of Government. The very fact that they have to depend more upon the written word than upon the spoken word should induce us to minimize as far as possible the difficulties from which they suffer, and help them to get the problems facing them dealt with sympathetically and intelligently, so that they may be solved in a way which will give them some chance of making prosperous homes where they are situated instead of being forced off the land as they have been in increasing numbers during the last couple of decades. It was hoped that Federation would largely solve their problems in this respect, inasmuch as it would abolish all border friction, and possibly create a new spirit in remote parts of States so badly treated in the past in the matter of representation in Parliament; but here we are now seeking to accentuate their lack of representation. The Minister has objected to the use of the word "direct" in the amendment, saying that it is an invasion for party political purposes of an act of administration which should be kept entirely independent of the Executive. If either House of Parliament passes a resolution disapproving of any proposed distribution or negatives a motion for the approval of a proposed distribution, the Act provides that the Minister may direct the Distribution Commissioners to propose a fresh distribution. All that the amendment does is to follow the very wording of the provision. In 1912 all the distributions proposed by the Commissioners were sent back with the exception of the Victorian. On that occasion the honorable member for Herbert (Mr. Bamford) moved as a further amendment, "That the Queensland report be referred back to the Commissioners for further consideration." I would like to know the exact terms of the reference back to the Commissioners. I would like to know whether there was any direction given to the Commissioners. I would like to ask the Attorney-General

whether an amendment merely to the effect that the report be referred back to the Commissioners for further consideration would be accepted. Merely to refer it back, and say, "This is no good; you must do something better," would be futile. There should be some indication of that "something better." I understand that what the Commissioners did previously was to carefully scan the records of parliamentary debates to ascertain why their reports were unacceptable. All that the amendment seeks is that the Commissioners shall pay more regard to community or diversity of interests. The scheme for New South Wales has been accepted. It was framed along the lines which we desire for Victoria. Why should not the report concerning this State be referred back with a request that the Commissioners make their redistribution on the general basis of the New South Wales scheme? Recognition has been given there, by the Commissioners, to the necessity for disparity between the populations of the various divisions. In the course of the debate upon the scheme for New South Wales the question of relative numbers as between city and country electorates did not arise. But the extent of divisions in that State is striking. The honorable member for Barrier (Mr. Considine), for example, is to be transferred to an electorate which is equal to about half the area of the State, and almost twice the size of Victoria. Is it fair that he should be called upon to be sole representative of such an enormous area of country? Is it reasonable to expect that his constituents will be able to keep closely in touch with him, or that he will be able to give adequate attention to their requirements?

With respect to means of communication alone there is every cause for dissatisfaction, when considering the proposals as applied to Gippsland, Wannon, Wimmera, Echuca, and Indi. The railways cannot be used as an adequate means of transit. In some instances, a representative would have to return from one point of his electorate practically into Melbourne before starting out again to reach another point. The only way in which decent representation of country interests can be secured is to so alter the Constitution as to permit of redistribution on the basis of a fixed quota. If the country continues to lose population, and the cities grow numerically stronger day

by day, no man will be able to represent the vast outside areas. The member representing Kalgoorlie is to be called upon to represent about nineteen-twentieths of the largest State in the Commonwealth—an area greater than the whole of the huge State of Queensland; while Maranoa, one of the Queensland electorates, is almost three times the size of Victoria. I trust that their report will be sent back to the Commissioners, and that the House will plainly indicate its desire to have the Victorian redistribution carried out upon lines similar to those which have been followed in New South Wales.

The honorable member for Corangamite (Mr. Gibson) recently introduced a deputation to the Government, which was representative of seventy-one shires and municipalities. The speakers made a definite point of the serious difficulties of communication, which would be met with in the proposed redistributed divisions; and they complained that there was no real community of interest between various parts of those divisions, whereby they could be formed into compact homogeneous electoral units. A far better method of redistribution was indicated when the honorable member for Corangamite referred, this morning, to the cutting up of the western portion of Victoria along a line from east to west rather than from north to south, thus maintaining unimpaired the community of interest afforded by the dairying districts and agricultural areas. There is such a strong demand throughout Victoria for the return of the Commissioners' proposals for further consideration, that this House should not dare to ignore it.

Mr. FENTON (Maribyrnong) [3.28].—The Government appear to have made up their mind that the redistribution proposals shall be regarded as party questions. The Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) has forgotten, perhaps, that he announced only a little while ago that, upon these matters, the actions of members would be free from party considerations. Unfortunately, there was exercised last evening the closest party methods. I was a member of this Parliament in 1912 when the Commonwealth was re-divided. At that time the reports of the Commissioners covering five of the States were referred back to them. The proposals for Victoria were the only ones which were accepted without reconsideration.



Mr. FOLEY.—And did not party feelings run high then?

Mr. FENTON.—There were just as keen representatives of Western Australia in this Parliament in 1912 as there are to-day. I am not going to say they are not as keen to-day, but they are not more keen. On that occasion the wishes of the Western Australian members were assented to by a majority of the House, and the scheme was referred back to the Commissioners. I mention that incident as a contrast to what has been done on the present occasion. The party issue did not enter into the question, but a majority of the House decided what should be done. The Prime Minister of the day, and those who had charge of the resolutions, intimated that it was a non-party matter, and that members on all sides of the House were free to state their views and vote accordingly. Members were told that if their views were favoured by a majority of the House, the question would be referred back to the Commissioners. If a majority of the Victorian members had been favorable to referring the matter back for reconsideration, there was such a feeling of comradeship, even between members of different parties, and sufficient common sense and fairness in the House, that their wishes would have been complied with. As such action is provided for in the Act, and has been taken before, why should it be regarded as a crime to-day? It was regarded as a virtue in days gone by. I know that members who come from large States laugh when one refers to the comparatively small State of Victoria. The honorable member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Foley) may say that his electorate can swallow up four electorates of the size of Victoria. I would draw the honorable member's attention to the map of Victoria. A very small area represents the metropolitan electorates. It can be covered on the map by two fingers, but it would take many large hands to cover the rest of Victoria. I represent a city constituency, but it is a type of city constituency which has electors in it who are dependent for their livelihood, in the long run, upon the success of rural industries. I think I can say with truth that in the Maribyrnong electorate we manufacture more agricultural implements than are

made in the rest of Australia. Apart altogether from the words used by the honorable member for Swan (Mr. Prowse), and apart from the national view, which I also try to exercise, I have a personal interest, through my constituency, in agricultural progress. Although I am a city member, I believe that Victoria has been very badly treated indeed at the hands of the Commissioners. May I appeal to the fairness of honorable members? In round figures there is a slight difference in population in favour of the metropolis as against the country. Half the population, roughly, is in the country and half in the metropolitan area. One of the natural conclusions of a common-sense man would be that if the city possesses half the population and the country possesses the other half, the distribution of members should be equal, as far as possible, as between the city and the country. It is beyond our ability to secure that every constituency should have the same number of electors or the same number of inhabitants. I am not making any special plea. So far as my own interests are affected, I am unconcerned, because my constituency, as at present constituted, suits me equally as well as the other.

Mr. STORY.—If there were twenty-one members, would the honorable member give the city 10½ and the country 10½?

Mr. FENTON.—I presume that we would do something similar to that which we did last time, when we gave eleven members to the country and ten to the city. The country were then given a majority of the members, although they had no more than half the population. In common with the honorable member for Cowper (Dr. Earle Page), I think the New South Wales Commissioners have taken a correct view of things. Although Sydney has not quite half the population of New South Wales, but nearly half, there are two more members in the country than in the city areas.

Mr. STORY. — You voted against the recommendation of the Commissioners.

Mr. FENTON.—I did not. I voted for a fair and square deal all round. That is all that either New South Wales or Victoria asks for. We voted for a more equitable method than is in existence at

the present time. All the talk about placing people on the land, about immigration, and about decentralization, is just idle prattle. Concrete evidence of that is furnished by the Federal electoral map of Victoria, which, if the proposal passes this House, will be a lasting illustration of the insincerity of talk of that sort. This Government, and those who follow it, care not a snap of the fingers for the rural interests of this country. The map will be one of the finest election placards obtainable in provincial areas. Honorable members do not seem to realize the strong feeling that is passing through the community to-day. Whilst representing city constituencies, we on this side of the House are prepared to give a fair deal to our country brothers. There has been an agitation in the Prime Minister's electorate. At Maryborough, which is one of the big provincial centres, a scheme originated for calling together one of the largest municipal conferences held in recent times. That conference came to the unanimous conclusion that the redistribution scheme in Victoria was an iniquitous proposal. I can tell the Prime Minister, and he may take it as a friendly or an unfriendly warning, that if the proposal goes through he will have an exceptionally ticklish time in the Bendigo electorate on that one question alone. The same feeling runs right through the electorates of Victoria. I believe in decentralization. The capital cities of the Commonwealth are completely overloaded. Australia will never be prosperous, and its metropolitan residents will never be in the fullest enjoyment of their privileges, unless they are backed in the provincial areas by a thriving population settled upon the soil. Anybody who takes a reasonable view of the situation must come to this conclusion. The Prime Minister will be faced with most strenuous opposition in his division if he stands by the present proposal. Victoria's principal centres are crowded with people, while large areas of country lands are being neglected. There is sure to be trouble if this state of affairs is allowed to continue. If it happens to be my good fortune to face the electors again, I shall make it my business to place before them, from the public platforms, the facts about the disgraceful

*Mr. Fenton.*

way in which the redistribution schemes have been allowed to go through. It is not often I agree with members of the Women's National League, but upon this issue, at all events, I thoroughly indorse the protest which they have made against the redistribution of seats in Victoria. I have no desire to cast a reflection upon the Commissioners, but I am sure that, if they are satisfied a mistake has been made, they will be quite prepared to set the matter right. That is all we want. We are asking that the scheme shall be referred back to the Commissioners. The honorable member for Cowper (Dr. Earle Page) this afternoon submitted a volume of evidence in support of this course. If the position is considered in all its bearings, I am sure that the common sense of honorable members will come to the rescue of the Victorian members. I strongly deprecate the introduction of any party feeling into this discussion; but I cannot help reminding the Government of the fate that befell the Wilson Government in Western Australia in 1910, as a result of the jerryandering of the electorates in that State. They and their supporters thought they had made everything secure, and were, in fact, throwing up their hats at the thought that they had made their return certain. But, to their surprise, they were ignominiously defeated. Something of the same party spirit appears to be animating the Government and their supporters over these redistribution proposals. To put it plainly, the Nationalists think they have a good thing on; but when the people realize what unfair tactics have been adopted, they will rise in their might, and even in some of the so-called "safe" constituencies National candidates will be strenuously opposed. I have no complaint to make about my own division; but I cannot help thinking some peculiar things have been done in the revision of boundaries. The honorable member for Parramatta (Mr. Pratten) last night indicated a few. He pointed out that certain municipalities had been cut to pieces in the new subdivisions. A number of municipalities in Maribyrnong have been treated in the same way. Take Coburg as an illustration. Three-fourths of that city is now in the constituency of Bourke, and one-fourth in the division of Maribyrnong.



On the other side of my division three-fourths of the city of Footscray is now in Maribyrnong, and the other fourth in the division of Melbourne Ports.

Mr. PRATTEN.—How have they treated the Federal subdivisions?

Mr. FENTON.—In some cases they have been cut to pieces.

Mr. PRATTEN.—Last night I mentioned several that had been shattered.

Mr. FENTON.—But, as I have said, I am not making any complaint as far as my division is concerned. The Fawknor division, however, has been appreciably altered. Means of communication, apparently, have been overlooked, because the River Yarra has not been taken as a boundary throughout, for the reason, I believe, that portion of the division is part of the Albert ward in the Melbourne City Council, and the representative for Fawknor, if he wishes to visit that portion of his division, will find his way blocked by the river. Quite a number of most peculiar things have been done. If this were really a non-party matter, as it should be, I could conceive of the Treasurer (Mr. Bruce) voting to return this scheme to the Commissioners for further consideration. Why should not the honorable member for Flinders, as a Victorian representative, do that? When we previously considered these matters in 1912 the whole Ministry voted on occasions for the return of the proposals to the Commissioners for reconsideration. The Government having announced that this is a non-party matter, every honorable member in the House, even every Minister, is at liberty to vote to return the scheme to the Commissioners. Cabinet has decided to support these proposals *in globo*. It was not right to do that, and then say that they could be considered on non-party lines. With the party spirit prevailing, there is no likelihood of a just and equitable scheme of redistribution emanating from this Chamber. I say, unhesitatingly, that if the electoral map of Victoria had not been arranged according to the liking of the National party, the members of the Government would be amongst those voting to refer back the proposals for further consideration; but because the scheme submitted by the Commissioners suits Nationalist politics, the Government act

as a barrier to justice. Does the Treasurer consider it fair that the country districts, with half the population of Victoria, should have two members less than are given to the metropolitan area? Can he justify that arrangement in any country district? Can the honorable member for Wannon (Mr. Rodgers) do so? He cannot. If any advantage in respect to population quotas is to be given to either city or country districts, it should be given to the latter, which, because of their wide areas and lack of means of communication, are in a less desirable position than dwellers in the metropolitan area occupy. Some of the main objections to this scheme of redistribution come from the Prime Ministers' own electorate. It is all very well to talk about immigration, settling people upon the land, and decentralization, but this proposal is one of the greatest steps towards centralization that have been taken in recent years. Nothing could hit the country districts harder than a reduction of their parliamentary representation. By lack of judgment or error, the Commissioners have done an injustice to the country districts of Victoria, and the majority of Victorian members are desirous of the scheme being reconsidered, so that the injustice may be removed. The figures clearly show that the country will have a legitimate grievance against the Government and against the majority of this Parliament if this iniquitous proposal is carried. We cannot expect country people to accept meekly and mildly a scheme that is fraught with injustice to them. My words may be falling on deaf ears. Some honorable members may have made up their minds to stick to the Government through thick and thin; they have heard the crack of the party whip, and they are ready to do an injustice to Victoria. I do not wish to see a repetition of the injustice that was done last night.

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. Sir Elliot Johnson).—Order! The honorable member must not reflect upon a vote of the House.

Mr. FENTON.—I question whether the supporters of the proposal that was carried last night will be able to stand up to it when they go to the country. I could not go before my constituents and say that this scheme of redistribution is

fair, and I am certain that I could not say that before any country audience. It is proposed that every Victorian division shall have at least 3,500 more electors than have the divisions in New South Wales. What stronger argument could there be for referring the scheme back to the Commissioners, with an instruction that they shall take a leaf out of the book of the New South Wales Commissioners? The latter have allowed in the wide-stretched and thinly-populated Darling electorate, extending through Western New South Wales from the Queensland border to almost the Victorian border, only 36,000 electors, or, approximately, 6,000 less than the number allotted to the biggest metropolitan constituency. I do not think the Commissioners have done wrong in allowing that margin in favour of the country electorates.

Mr. HECTOR LAMOND.—The honorable member might explain how he justifies political interference with the Commissioners?

Mr. FENTON.—The honorable member may laugh, but this is not the first occasion on which I have spoken in defence of country interests. Although I am a city representative, deep down in my heart I realize that unless we can get into this great country a big provincial population things will go hard with the metropolitan areas. When we have the opportunity of giving to the country people that consideration which they richly deserve, let us take it by the hand. The debate has not yet concluded, and if the amendment now before the House is not accepted, others will be forthcoming in the effort to achieve the same end. I hope that in connexion with this amendment the Government whip will not be cracked quite so hard as it was on the amendment submitted on the proposed distribution of divisions in New South Wales by the honorable member for Cowper (Dr. Earle Page). I hope, also, that if it is cracked, Victorian representatives in this House will not be found amenable to the whip. The distribution proposed is not a just one. If I could honestly do so, I would have great pleasure in commending the Distribution Commissioners for their work, but I cannot do so. I should like to know what the Prime Minister has to say with regard to

the proposition submitted at the Municipal Conference called by the Maryborough Municipal Council. I hope that the Minister will consent to the adjournment of the debate. He may as well do so, because there are others to follow me if I resume my seat. I am supporting the amendment, because every time I look at the map I am struck by the injustice of the proposal that the small city area should return eleven members to this House, whilst the great area of the country districts, with more than half the population of the State, is to return only nine members, including the right honorable member for Bendigo, if he has the luck to struggle back to this House. To refer this distribution back to the Commissioners would not involve any great delay, because it is generally understood that Electoral Distribution Commissioners always adopt the precaution of preparing an alternative scheme. If the proposed distribution of Victoria were referred back to the Commissioners to-day, I believe that by the time we met on Wednesday next we should have an alternative scheme placed before us. I hope that the Minister will accept the amendment, and give us the opportunity of considering such an alternative scheme.

Mr. HUGHES (Bendigo—Prime Minister and Minister for External Affairs) [4.6].—I rise to make a suggestion. The Government in bringing forward this proposal are carrying out their constitutional obligation. If the honorable member who has moved the amendment is willing to withdraw that portion of it which gives a direction to the Distribution Commissioners, the Government will agree to this distribution being referred back to them.

Mr. GIBSON.—I ask leave to amend my amendment by omitting all the words after the word "divisions", line 9.

Amendment amended accordingly.

Amendment, as amended, agreed to.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

#### REDISTRIBUTION OF QUEENSLAND.

Motion (by Mr. GROOM) agreed to—

That the House of Representatives approves of the distribution of the State of Queensland into electoral divisions as proposed by Messrs. A. A. Spowers, R. H. Allars, and P. E. Walcott,



the Distribution Commissioners for the purpose of distributing the said State into divisions, in their report laid before Parliament on the 29th day of June, 1922, and that the names of the divisions suggested in the report and indicated on the map referred to therein be adopted.

#### REDISTRIBUTION OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

Motion (by Mr. GROOM) agreed to—

That the House of Representatives approves of the distribution of the State of South Australia into electoral divisions as proposed by Messrs. T. E. Day, O. H. Stephens, and J. Gardiner, the Distribution Commissioners for the purpose of distributing the said State into divisions, in their report laid before Parliament on the 29th day of June, 1922, and that the names of the divisions suggested in the report and indicated in red on the map referred to therein be adopted.

#### REDISTRIBUTION OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

Motion (by Mr. GROOM) agreed to—

That the House of Representatives approves of the distribution of the State of Western Australia into electoral divisions as proposed by Messrs. H. S. King, H. R. Way, and J. F. Whitely, the Distribution Commissioners for the purpose of distributing the said State into divisions, in their report laid before Parliament on the 29th day of June, 1922, and that the divisions referred to in the report and indicated on the map as A, B, C, D, and E, be named as follows:—

|            |    |    |             |
|------------|----|----|-------------|
| Division A | .. | .. | Perth.      |
| " B        | .. | .. | Fremantle.  |
| " C        | .. | .. | Kalgoorlie. |
| " D        | .. | .. | Swan.       |
| " E        | .. | .. | Forrest     |

#### REDISTRIBUTION OF TASMANIA.

Motion (by Mr. GROOM) agreed to—

That the House of Representatives approves of the distribution of the State of Tasmania into electoral divisions as proposed by Messrs. E. A. Counsel, J. E. Cathie, and P. C. Douglas, the Distribution Commissioners for the purpose of distributing the said State into divisions, in their report laid before Parliament on the 29th day of June, 1922, and that the names of the divisions suggested in the report and indicated in red on the map referred to therein be adopted.

### ADJOURNMENT.

#### ORDER OF BUSINESS—CASE OF DROWNING—CIRCULATION OF WEATHER REPORTS.

Mr. HUGHES (Bendigo—Prime Minister and Minister for External Affairs) [4.11].—In moving—

That the House do now adjourn,

I wish to intimate that we shall ask honorable members next week to discuss and pass the motion for the approval of the Treaties which I have laid on the table of the House, and on which I spoke last Wednesday. For the reasons that I gave last night, the matter is urgent.

Sir GRANVILLE RYRIE (North Sydney—Honorary Minister) [4.12].—Yesterday, the honorable member for Eden-Monaro (Mr. Austin Chapman) inquired whether the drowning of two men who were swept away by flood waters in his electorate recently was due to lack of official notifications concerning weather conditions and the imminence of disastrous floods. I have received from the Government Meteorologist a report in which he states that—

The deaths were not due to the lack of official notifications concerning weather conditions and the imminence of disastrous floods. As will be seen by the copies of my advices, attached, the resumption of the flood-warning service was effected, and warning actually issued, before the flood rains had occurred where the deaths as reported in the press took place.

Mr. Hunt attaches a copy of a telegram sent on 25th inst. to the Inspector-General of Police, Sydney—

More flood rains probable, especially south from Sydney. Big rises expected in tributaries Macquarie and Lachlan.

A telegram was also addressed by him, on the 24th inst., to the State Meteorologist, Sydney—

To-day's chart indicates probable flood rains parts north coastal districts. Please arrange immediately temporary resumption telegrams from all highland and coastal stations to Sydney Bureau, in order flood warnings may, if necessary, be issued.

On the same day, a telegram was despatched to the State Meteorologist, Brisbane, stating that, "To-day's chart indicates probable flood rains parts south border coast districts, Queensland," and directing the resumption of telegrams from all highland and coastal stations concerned. The Government Meteorologist assures me that it was not due to lack of information as to the imminence of floods that this unfortunate occurrence took place.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

House adjourned at 4.15 p.m.

## Senate.

Wednesday, 2 August, 1922.

The PRESIDENT (Senator the Hon. T. Givens) took the chair at 3 p.m., and read prayers.

### REPATRIATION.

#### TREATMENT OF LIMBLESS SOLDIERS— ADVANCES FOR SOLDIER SETTLEMENT.

Senator GUTHRIE.—I ask the Minister for Repatriation if he can inform the Senate when the promised Bill to rectify anomalies in connexion with the treatment of limbless soldiers is likely to be introduced?

Senator E. D. MILLEN.—It is the desire of the Government to introduce the Bill at the earliest possible opportunity which the position of public business will permit.

Senator WILSON.—I ask the Minister for Repatriation if it is a fact that the Government desire to charge the Government of South Australia  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. for money advanced for soldiers' homes? Has the honorable senator's attention been drawn to remarks made by the Minister dealing with the matter in South Australia, asserting that that is the way in which the Commonwealth Government are assisting the returned soldiers?

Senator E. D. MILLEN.—I have seen the paragraph to which I think Senator Wilson refers. The honorable senator is slightly in error in connecting his question with money advanced for soldiers' homes. The reference is to advances for land settlement of soldiers.

Senator WILSON.—For returned soldier purposes.

Senator E. D. MILLEN.—The circumstances are these: When the Commonwealth Government entered into agreements with the State Governments to advance money for soldier settlement, it was agreed, necessarily by both the State and Commonwealth Governments, that the Commonwealth Government should charge the State Governments with the cost to the Commonwealth, whatever it might be. The agreement was that whatever the Commonwealth Government paid in

raising loans for the purpose should be charged to the State Governments, less a rebate of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. for the first five years. The South Australian Government entered into that agreement, and in consequence have been called upon to pay the higher rate which the Commonwealth Government had to pay in the raising of one of the loans. It is necessary, I may add, to expect the State Government to meet their obligations in this respect, for the reason that when the Commonwealth Government obtained cheaper money the State Governments accepted it; but when the loans cost the Commonwealth more than other loans have cost, the State Governments objected to taking the dearer money. As the money was raised for the special purpose of returned soldier land settlement, the effect of the refusal of the State Government to accept advances borrowed for the purpose, would have been to leave the dearer money which they had no immediate purpose for, in the hands of the Commonwealth Government. It is therefore clear that we have a right to expect that the State Governments shall honour their obligations.

Senator WILSON.—Have the Commonwealth Government ever paid  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. for money?

Senator E. D. MILLEN.—When the honorable senator comes down to fractions, I hope he will not expect to bind me to a definite answer. The State Governments are charged what the money costs the Commonwealth Government. I am not aware whether it cost  $7\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $7\frac{3}{8}$ , or  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. I am safe in saying that one loan cost the Commonwealth Government more than 7 per cent. Whatever the cost of the loan was, that is the cost less the  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. rebate to which I have referred, which is charged to the State Government.

### NORTHERN TERRITORY.

#### RETURN TO SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

Senator THOMAS.—I ask the Leader of the Senate whether he is aware that, whilst giving evidence before the Public Works Committee recently in Adelaide on the North-South railway, several prominent men in South Australia expressed regret that that State had parted with the Northern Territory, and considered that the State would do well to secure its



return. Have the Government received any request from the South Australian Government to this effect? If not, will the Commonwealth Government return the Northern Territory to South Australia if the Government of that State so desires, in order that the people of South Australia may build the North-South railway for themselves?

Senator E. D. MILLEN.—I have seen a report of the evidence to which the honorable senator referred. I can say definitely that no proposal has been made to the Commonwealth Government for the return of the Northern Territory to South Australia.

### TAXATION.

#### OFFICERS OF FEDERAL TAXATION DEPARTMENT, SOUTH AUSTRALIA—PERCENTAGE PAID BY STATES.

Senator VARDON.—I ask the Minister representing the Treasurer whether he can give me a reply to the question I asked last week on the subject of officers of the Federal Taxation Department of South Australia?

Senator E. D. MILLEN.—The honorable senator asked some questions as to the number of officers employed in the Federal Taxation office in South Australia, and the total amount paid in salaries and wages. The answers supplied to his questions are as follow:—

|                                                |     |
|------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. (a) Assessors .. ..                         | 58  |
| (b) General clerks, other than assessors .. .. | 66  |
| (c) Typists .. ..                              | 24  |
| (d) In any other capacity .. ..                | 93  |
| Total staff .. ..                              | 241 |
| 2. £52,256 10s. 3d.                            |     |

Senator THOMAS.—I ask the Minister representing the Treasurer whether he is yet in a position to answer the questions I asked one day last week with respect to the percentage of taxation paid by the several States?

Senator E. D. MILLEN.—The honorable senator asked for information as to the percentage of income tax, land tax, and Customs duty paid by the various States into the Commonwealth Treasury, and the percentage on all taxation paid by each State. I replied that the information would be obtained as soon as possible, and I have now received the fol-

lowing answers to the honorable senator's questions:—

1. The undermentioned figures (except those in regard to Customs duties) have now been furnished by the Commissioner of Taxation, who explains that the statistics kept do not show what portions of the income tax, the war-time profits tax, and the estate duty assessed in the Central Taxation Office are applicable to each State. The figures regarding income tax and those in the answer to question 2 are therefore approximate only. The Customs figures relate only to the duties collected in each State. The goods are not traced into the States in which they are consumed. Therefore it is not possible to say how much duty is paid by the consumers in any State.

| State.             | Income Tax.<br>per cent. | Land Tax.<br>per cent. | Customs Duties.<br>per cent. |
|--------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|
| New South Wales    | 42                       | 57                     | 45                           |
| Victoria ..        | 30                       | 21                     | 34                           |
| Queensland ..      | 12                       | 10                     | 8                            |
| South Australia .. | 7                        | 6                      | 8                            |
| Western Australia  | 6                        | 4                      | 4                            |
| Tasmania ..        | 3                        | 2                      | 1                            |
|                    | 100                      | 100                    | 100                          |

| State.                  | Percentage. |
|-------------------------|-------------|
| New South Wales .. ..   | 45          |
| Victoria .. ..          | 30          |
| Queensland .. ..        | 10          |
| South Australia .. ..   | 8           |
| Western Australia .. .. | 5           |
| Tasmania .. ..          | 2           |
|                         | 100         |

### READING OF LETTER.

#### CHARGE AGAINST A SENATOR.

Senator FOLL.—I ask you, Mr. President, whether you are aware that during my absence for a few days Senator MacDonald read a letter in this Chamber which he had received from Mr. Brennan, the honorable member for Batman, in which that honorable member stated that an interjection I had made during a speech by Senator Wilson was practically inspired to enable Senator Wilson to repeat a statement which the honorable member for Batman alleges was untrue? I should like to know whether the occurrence was in accordance with the usual parliamentary practice, and whether an honorable senator is in order in reading a letter of that description, in which a member of another place makes charges against a member of the Senate.

The PRESIDENT (Senator the Hon. T. Givens).—I do not remember exactly what took place on the occasion referred to or what was the purport of the letter. No point of order was raised when Senator MacDonald read the letter, and I do not think that any point of order arose. However, it has to be borne in mind that a point of order can only be raised at the time of the occurrence to which exception is taken. It cannot be raised later.

### PAPERS.

The following papers were presented:—

Customs Act—Proclamation, dated 5th July, 1922, prohibiting exportation (except under certain conditions) of Canned Peaches, Apricots, Pears, Plums, Cherries, and Pineapples.

International Labour Organization of the League of Nations—Third Conference, held at Geneva, 1921—Reports by Australian Delegates.

Northern Territory—Ordinance No. 9 of 1922—Stock Diseases.

Public Works Committee Act—Seventh General Report.

### POST AND TELEGRAPH DEPARTMENT.

Senator SENIOR.—I ask the Minister representing the Postmaster-General if he has yet obtained replies to the questions I put on the 13th July in connexion with postal matters?

Senator EARLE.—I shall make inquiries, and reply to the honorable senator later.

### NAVIGATION.

#### PORT CHARGES ON OVERSEA SHIPS.

Senator FAIRBAIRN asked the Minister representing the Minister for Trade and Customs, *upon notice*—

Will he have a return prepared showing the port charges on oversea ships trading with the State capital city ports of each State of the Commonwealth?

Senator EARLE.—The information is being obtained.

### PUBLIC SERVICE.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS OF ECONOMIES COMMISSION.

Senator THOMAS asked the Leader of the Government in the Senate, *upon notice*—

1. Is it a fact that a Royal Commission was appointed by the Commonwealth Government

to consider and report upon the expenditure of the Commonwealth of Australia, with a view to effecting economies?

2. If so, when was the Royal Commission appointed?

3. What was the cost of the Commission?

4. When did it report?

5. Did the Royal Commission suggest any economies in the public expenditure?

6. Have any of its suggestions been carried out?

7. If so, which, and what has been the amount saved?

Senator E. D. MILLEN. — The answers are—

1. Yes.

2. 21st November, 1918.

3. £2,405 12s.

4. The Commission submitted reports as follows:—(a) First progress report, 14th July, 1919; (b) Final report, 10th November, 1920.

5. Yes.

6. Yes.

7. It is not possible at this stage to state in exact figures what amount has been saved. Many proposals in regard to the staffing methods of working in the various Departments investigated by the Economy Commission have been given effect to, as have also many of its suggestions in regard to housing accommodation.

### ELECTORAL DIVISIONS.

#### REDISTRIBUTION OF NEW SOUTH WALES.

Senator PEARCE (Western Australia —Minister for Home and Territories) [3.14].—I move—

That the Senate approves of the distribution of the State of New South Wales into electoral divisions as proposed by Messrs. J. Broughton, S. Irwin, and H. A. Smith, the Distribution Commissioners for the purpose of distributing the said State into divisions, in their report laid before Parliament on the 29th day of June, 1922, and that the names of the divisions suggested in the report and indicated in red on the maps referred to therein be adopted, except that the name "Barton" be substituted for "Kogarah", and the name "Reid" for "Granville", and the name "Eden-Monaro" for "Monaro".

In submitting this motion I do not propose to go into details regarding the reports of the Commissioners, which have been in the hands of honorable senators for some time. I am sure that the Senate will agree that the distribution of the States into constituencies is a matter that more directly concerns the House of Representatives than the Senate, and I think we shall be inclined to take the view that what is agreeable to the House more directly concerned is agreeable to this Chamber. There is a statutory obligation laid upon any Govern-



ment in connexion with these matters. When a census has been taken it is part of the statutory duty of the Chief Electoral Officer to acquaint the Government with the necessity, should such exist under the Representation Act, for a redistribution of seats. Subsequent to the taking of the last census the Chief Electoral Officer, in accordance with the Act, presented a certificate to the Government, which accordingly took steps to appoint Commissioners for the various States. These Commissioners are not free agents; they are bound by the directions given to them in the Act, which, in its more important particulars, is a replica of the Constitution. The Commissioners having presented their reports, it then becomes the duty of the Government of the day to place those reports before Parliament. That has been done in each case. In each State the Government has endeavoured to secure impartial Commissioners of a type who are capable of dealing with the subject efficiently. Honorable senators will find, if they look through the list of Commissioners, that they are men who are well acquainted with the geographical and other conditions of their State, and that they are in no sense party men. The Commissioners have submitted their reports, which, with one exception, have been unanimously adopted by another place. It is provided that if either House objects to a report it shall be referred back to the Commissioners. This has been done in the case of one of the reports. I do not intend to worry honorable senators by debating unnecessary particulars, and I do not think I need read the Commissioners' reports, or the reasons which have appealed to them in putting forward their scheme. I think it is sufficient for us that the House more directly concerned has accepted the scheme.

Senator GARDINER (New South Wales) [3.18].—I do not quite agree with the Minister (Senator Pearce) that if the other House, which is particularly interested, is satisfied with the re-arrangement proposed, we should necessarily accept it, and particularly so when we come to consider how they were "satisfied" with it. Unfortunately, I have been unable to leave my room for a month; but by reading the newspapers I learned that the other House was "satisfied," after a threat had been issued, that if it did not vote for the

proposals there would be an election within eight weeks. There was only a difference of one vote on the division. There is only one thing that prevents my putting in a protest against the motion before the Senate, and that is that my following is not sufficiently strong to back me up. Ten years ago, when a similar distribution was made in New South Wales, we were strong enough to throw it out. It went back to the Commissioners, who amended it very slightly, and as the other House did not alter it, I adopted the easy-going attitude of Senator Pearce, and allowed it to pass. It is quite possible that Senator E. D. Millen, who has contested, perhaps, seven Senate elections, knows a great deal more about community of interest than any other honorable senator. I do not desire it to be thought that I am reflecting on the Commissioners who made the redistribution of New South Wales; but the fact that they are all honorable men does not relieve me of the necessity to put forward my objections. The Commissioners were made aware of slight alterations as to community of interest, and, so far as my information goes, not the slightest notice was taken of those representations. I can quite understand that a member, with an assured seat, whose position is made safer still, is not likely to make any representations in favour of a change; but the member whose position is rendered less favorable will probably become quite active in that direction. What I contend is that the Senate has a right to return the redistribution to its authors, and ask them to put it right according to community of interest. The old centre of the district of Robertson was Mudgee, but, instead of forming an electorate according to community of interest, the Commissioners some ten years ago ran across until they struck the Maitland coal-fields district; and, with a certain number of voters from the coal-fields, Robertson might have become a Labour seat. There was a Labour Government in power at the time. The Commissioners then extended the district to within 50 miles of Sydney. On the present occasion the Commissioners again ran down to Woy Woy, and when they came up from Mudgee and struck the coal-fields they spread out left and right to cut out the electors who happened to vote Labour.

Senator THOMAS.—Where do they leave the Labour votes?

Senator GARDINER.—For Newcastle and Hunter.

Senator THOMAS.—Does the honorable member for Hunter (Mr. Charlton) object to that?

Senator GARDINER.—I have already mentioned that the representative whose seat is made more secure is not likely to protest. My point is that it is not the business of the Commissioners to alter electorates in the interests of parties according to existing conditions. The present redistribution has made the position in New South Wales worse than it was ten years ago, because the Commissioners extended the Robertson constituency up the North Coast. The length of that district could be shortened by hundreds of miles by taking in the industrial centres. What community of interest is there between the week-end residents of Woy Woy, on the Hawkesbury River, and the agricultural and mining districts of Mudgee; or between Mudgee and the North Coast? I do not wish to leave the impression in the minds of honorable senators that I accuse the Commissioners of having intentionally made a party division. I exonerate them from that, but the result of their division is, nevertheless, a party one.

Eden-Monaro was a district of farming, grazing, and similar interests. It has now been run into the dairying districts of Illawarra. Illawarra is absolutely swallowed up by the Werriwa electorate, which seat is at present held by a Labour man. I do not object to a few thousand votes of coal-miners being added to the electorate of a representative of coal-miners; but there should be some attention paid to community of interest. The Commissioners have made Werriwa an absolutely safe Labour seat.

Senator THOMAS.—Why object to that?

Senator GARDINER.—I am not objecting, but I am pointing it out. From the knowledge I have of New South Wales, I can only come to the conclusion that the result of the redistribution will be to make Labour seats doubly safe, and to do exactly the same with regard to Nationalist seats. Party interest has received more consideration than community of interest.

Senator THOMAS.—Then both parties have received the same consideration.

Senator GARDINER.—I hope that honorable senators will recognise that their duty is, first, to consider the whole of the electors, irrespective of party divisions.

Senator THOMAS.—A very noble sentiment!

Senator WILSON.—Not lived up to by many.

Senator GARDINER.—I hope to have the opportunity to continue to spread that sentiment. My only reason for not deliberately moving for the rejection of the redistribution is that I see no hopes of such a proposal being agreed to.

Senator THOMAS.—You did that once.

Senator GARDINER.—The only alteration the Commissioners made on that occasion was in regard to East Sydney and Wentworth. I am sorry that alteration was accepted in another place. I believe that if the same Commissioners were engaged ten years hence in dividing the whole State into electorates that that aspect would be considered. Whether it is wise or not that the representatives who at present hold their seats shall be so entrenched as to prevent any other candidate from securing a seat I do not know. Some appear to think that because both parties are satisfied there is no occasion to complain, but it must be remembered that there is a great and growing party known as the Country party which needs to be considered, and when the other parties are deliberately entrenched a third party would have to do some heavy "pick and shovel" work before its representatives would have an opportunity of securing seats in this Parliament. That is not fair if the electors want a change.

Senator THOMAS.—Has there been a single meeting of protest in New South Wales?

Senator GARDINER.—One could understand such meetings being held years ago when all sections were not represented in Parliament, but at present every shade of political opinion has representation, and the position is totally different. Thirty years ago, it was necessary to hold meetings of protest at which the views of the people could be expressed. In regard to this particular motion there was a difference of only one or two votes.



Senator THOMAS. — On a New South Wales redistribution?

Senator GARDINER.—Yes.

Senator EARLE.—No. The honorable senator is referring to the Victorian proposal.

Senator GARDINER.—Before we adjourn I shall peruse the records to see if I am not right.

Senator PEARCE.—There was no division at all in another place on the New South Wales redistribution.

Senator THOMAS.—The division to which the honorable senator is referring was on a totally different proposal.

Senator GARDINER.—Very well. If the amendment moved by the Leader of the Country party (Dr. Earle Page) had been carried, would not the whole scheme have been reconsidered?

Senator PEARCE. — The proposals affecting the other States would not have been sent back; but they could not have been put into operation, because the whole basis of representation would have been altered.

Senator GARDINER.—I take it that if the distributions submitted by the Commissioners had been thrown out it would have been the duty of the Government to ask the Commissioners to submit another set of proposals.

Senator PEARCE. — The object of the amendment moved by Dr. Earle Page was to alter the basis of representation.

Senator GARDINER.—I quite understand that, and to defeat the scheme.

Senator DRAKE-BROOKMAN.—To defeat the Government.

Senator GARDINER.—That is a most laudable object, and one which would have had my support. If the amendment which was defeated by one or two votes had been carried the Leader of the Government in another place (Mr. Hughes) would have given effect to his threat, and we would have had a general election within eight weeks. That is the way in which the whip was cracked. I could quote many instances to show how seats have been made absolutely sure for certain parties, but the cases I have quoted should be sufficient. In future I trust that, whenever Commissioners consider the map in conjunction with the population figures, a redistribution will be made on a fair basis, without

taking into consideration the interests of parties, because when we get down to that basis there will be more adequate representation of the people in another place. I hope I have not reflected upon the Commissioners, who, knowingly or unknowingly, wittingly or unwittingly, have formed electorates in the interests of parties, and that in future consideration will be given to those electors who may not be supporters of the political parties at present so strongly entrenched in certain electorates.

Senator PEARCE (Western Australia —Minister for Home and Territories) [3.36].—I cannot allow some of the statements made by the Leader of the Opposition (Senator Gardiner) to pass without comment. First of all he said that the motion covering redistribution in New South Wales was carried in another place under duress. The motion under which this scheme was adopted was carried on the voices, no division having been called for. The division that was taken, and in which there was a difference of only one vote, was not in opposition to any particular scheme, but on a proposal which, if carried, would have altered the basis of representation, and would have involved the sending back of this scheme to the Commissioners, and also an amendment of the Representation Act, and possibly an amendment of the Constitution. To show the impartiality of the Government in appointing Commissioners, I may inform the Senate that the Commissioners in New South Wales consisted of Mr. J. Broughton, the Surveyor-General of the State, who is a State official; Mr. Stewart Irwin, Commonwealth Electoral Officer for the State, who is the only Commonwealth officer on the Commission; and Mr. Horace Alexander Smith, of Sydney, the Government Statistician for the State. Is it likely that such an impartial body of competent men would consider the interests of parties? In their report the Commissioners invited attention to the proposal by advertisement, and paragraph 4 of that document reads—

Objections and suggestions in writing relating to the proposed Divisions of Calare, Darling, Parramatta, Martin, Newcastle, Robertson, and South Sydney, were received within the period prescribed by law for the lodgment of objections or suggestions.

After giving the whole of the objections and suggestions most careful consideration, your Commissioners were unable to adopt any of them.

That shows clearly that the Commissioners gave consideration to objections lodged, some of which, no doubt, were those referred to by Senator Gardiner. If the Commissioners had adopted the suggestions, are we to assume that every one would have been satisfied? Another set of objections would have been raised, probably by Senator Gardiner, who would have said that the States had been divided into electorates in such a way that the interests of his party had not been conserved, because there was, for instance, no community of interests between the miners and another section of the community in a particular electorate. The objections raised by Senator Gardiner showed that the Commissioners had endeavoured to preserve community and diversity of interests amongst the electors in those divisions. That seats have been made more secure for Labour is due to the fact that the Commissioners have grouped industrial communities where there is a community of interest, and where the electors generally vote Labour.

Senator DUNCAN.—It is just as well for some of the Labour members that they did.

Senator PEARCE.—The fact mentioned by Senator Gardiner is the clearest proof that the Commissioners have had regard for community of interest.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

#### REDISTRIBUTION OF VICTORIA.

Notice of motion (by Senator PEARCE) withdrawn—

That the Senate approves of the distribution of the State of Victoria into electoral divisions, as proposed by Messrs. R. C. Oldham, A. B. Lang, and R. H. Lawson, the Distribution Commissioners for the purpose of distributing the said State into divisions, in their report laid before Parliament on the 29th day of June, 1922, and that the names of the divisions suggested in the report and indicated on the map referred to therein be adopted, and that the name of the new division be "Deakin."

#### REDISTRIBUTION OF QUEENSLAND.

Senator PEARCE (Western Australia—Minister for Home and Territories) [3.41].—I move—

That the Senate approves of the distribution of the State of Queensland into electoral divisions as proposed by Messrs. A. A. Spowers,

R. H. Allars, and P. E. Walcott, the Distribution Commissioners for the purpose of distributing the said State into divisions, in their report laid before Parliament on the 29th day of June, 1922, and that the names of the divisions suggested in the report and indicated on the map referred to therein be adopted.

I do not propose to repeat the remarks I made with regard to the distribution of New South Wales, as I cannot add to my statement. The maps are available for any honorable senator who cares to peruse them.

Senator MACDONALD (Queensland) [3.43].—The statement made by Senator Gardiner concerning the redistribution of New South Wales divisions confirms my opinion about the position in that State, the general effect being to make the Labour seats—

The PRESIDENT (Senator the Hon. T. Givens).—Order! The honorable senator may not discuss the distribution proposals as they affect New South Wales. The motion has been disposed of.

Senator MACDONALD.—If I am allowed to develop my argument, I am sure, Mr. President, you will see that I shall be in order in making passing reference to the New South Wales distribution, the general effect of which has been to confirm Labour and Nationalist members in their seats.

Senator DUNCAN.—You do not object to that, do you?

Senator MACDONALD.—I do object to the general effect of the entire distribution scheme. I want to be perfectly fair. In 1913-14 the Labour party were in possession of seven out of the ten seats in Queensland.

Senator DE LARGIE.—Those were the days!

Senator MACDONALD.—Yes, those were the days when my honorable friend also flourished exceedingly.

Senator DUNCAN.—But gone are those days!

Senator MACDONALD.—They will come again. The distribution proposal will make it almost impossible for Labour, as we have known it in the past, to secure that representation which it is entitled to, and which it formerly enjoyed.

Senator GUTHRIE.—They were the dark days.

Senator MACDONALD.—If they were dark for the honorable senator and those who think with him, they were brighter days for the people. In Queensland the



divisions have been so re-arranged that there is little prospect of Labour winning two of the seats, even if we had such a swing as in 1913-14. New South Wales also may lose several seats as compared with 1914. I see one possible loss to Labour in Victoria, and I am informed that there is a prospective loss to Labour in South Australia as well.

Senator SENIOR.—Your information with regard to South Australia is incorrect.

Senator MACDONALD.—My informant as to the position in South Australia is a South Australian, and one who, probably, sees things a little clearer than does the honorable senator. My opinion as to Queensland is based on my own knowledge, as is also my fear about the position in Victoria, because formerly I was resident in this State. It is obvious that two of the Queensland seats—Brisbane and Oxley—have been made somewhat better for Labour.

Senator PEARCE.—It is a reformation, not a redistribution.

Senator MACDONALD.—But it is not satisfactory in all its aspects. Those are undoubtedly Labour constituencies. The constituencies of Maranoa and Wide Bay are more difficult for Labour to win, and are made still more difficult by the proposed distribution. I do not wish to reflect on any electoral distribution Commissioners. It is difficult to reflect on men holding such important positions; but I must still express the frank opinion that the total result of the work of the Commissioners who divided Queensland is likely to be remarkably satisfactory to those who are opposed to the Labour party.

Senator EARLE.—Does the honorable senator say that that is not a reflection on the distribution Commissioners?

Senator MACDONALD.—I say it is not.

Senator EARLE.—It is undoubtedly a reflection on them.

Senator MACDONALD.—I do not think so, though Senator Earle is trying to make it appear so. I know one of the Commissioners, and have always found him to be an honorable man; but I still say that the effect of their work, so far as the distribution of Queensland is concerned, is likely to be that the Labour party will lose two Queensland seats. I say that whatever the influence behind it,

that is likely to be the result of the proposed redistribution should the people return to the state of mind which obtained in 1913-14.

Senator DUNCAN.—Are the honorable senator's remarks inspired by his experience of the time when Mr. Theodore gerrymandered the Queensland electorates?

Senator MACDONALD.—When did that happen?

Senator DUNCAN.—The honorable senator knows when it happened.

Senator MACDONALD.—So far as the State electorates in Queensland are concerned the last redistribution took place under the Denham-Barnes Government in 1912, and before the Labour Government came into power. The ignorance of Senator Duncan is alarming. Apparently, he is not aware that in Queensland the Labour party have on three occasions won general elections that took place on redistributions by former anti-Labour Governments.

Senator PEARCE.—Does the honorable senator say that the State redistribution in Queensland now is satisfactory?

Senator MACDONALD.—I say that in view of the movement of population during the last ten years it is satisfactory. That movement has been recognised in the redistribution of State electorates on which the next elections in Queensland will take place.

Senator PEARCE.—Is that new distribution satisfactory?

Senator MACDONALD.—So far as I know there have been very few complaints made about it, although I do not say that it does not contain some anomalies. With respect to the redistribution of Queensland into Commonwealth electorates, to which I am now addressing myself, I am saying frankly what I have in mind, though, no doubt, the proposed redistribution is pleasing to some Federal representatives who will be standing for confirmed Labour seats. The Kennedy electorate which could be won in almost any circumstances by Labour has been made better for the Labour candidate.

Senator GUTHRIE.—And worse for the Country party candidate.

Senator MACDONALD.—Worse for the alleged Country party. In the case of the Maranoa electorate, I do not think that the objective of community of interest has been realized by the proposed

distribution, because Barcaldine, which was in the northern section of the Maranoa electorate, has been included in the Kennedy electorate, and a Conservative end of the Darling Downs electorate has been dragged into the proposed new Maranoa electorate, and will make that electorate a most difficult one for Labour to win. I do not propose to move any amendment, because I realize that to do so would be of little use, and would be merely wasting the time of the Senate. I feel that behind the proposed redistribution there is a deliberate intention to make it very difficult, if not impossible, for the Labour party ever to regain political control in the Commonwealth Parliament.

**Senator LYNCH** (Western Australia) [3.57].—The motion before us particularly concerns representatives of Queensland in this Chamber; but glancing hurriedly over the proposed redistribution of divisions in Queensland, and in the absence of better information from the Government, I am anxious to know whether allowance has been made in the way provided by the Act for giving a percentage over and above the quota to different electorates. I notice, for instance, that, as compared with country divisions, the city of Brisbane is given an increased voting strength. It is quite clear that if we desire to do more than merely indulge in talk about the drift of population to the cities, a chance is given to us in dealing with these redistribution proposals, to give those who live far from the pleasant resorts of the cities a better and more effective voice in public affairs by giving country districts the benefit of the margin below the quota for which the Act provides. I notice that in the proposed new redistribution of Queensland, Brisbane is to have a voting strength of 39,000, whilst Capricornia, which is a country constituency, is required to have a voting strength of 42,000.

**Senator PEARCE**.—What about Kennedy and Maranoa?

**Senator LYNCH**.—I find that the division of Herbert is required to have a voting strength of 40,000. So that Brisbane, as compared with Capricornia and Herbert, is given a distinct advantage. Here are two glaring instances of two country constituencies that are not receiv-

ing the consideration which, in season and out of season, by means of Governor-General's Speeches and in every other way, we assert that they are entitled to.

**Senator GARDINER**.—The honorable senator never heard me say that a man living in the country is entitled to more parliamentary representation than a man living in the city.

**Senator LYNCH**.—I do not know that I have heard the honorable senator say anything more often than that the man living on the countryside should be given more sympathy than the man living in the city.

**Senator GARDINER**.—I have never in election matters shifted from the principle of one man one vote.

**Senator LYNCH**.—We might, in dealing with these redistributions, in a most effective way give the men on the countryside some chance of making their influence felt in this Parliament. To give a greater voting power to electors in Brisbane than is given to electors in Capricornia and Herbert may suit Senator Gardiner, but it does not, and never will, suit me. My voice will always be raised on behalf of the man who gets away from the congested cities of the Commonwealth and goes out to blaze the track. In this proposed redistribution of the Queensland electorates, men are penalized for blazing the track. The Minister (Senator Pearce) referred to the Maranoa electorate, which is to include 33,242 electors, but I remind him further that the number required for the Darling Downs electorate is greater than that required for the city of Brisbane. I feel that I ought to be given an opportunity to voice the opinion I hold that if the Government really desire that the country shall progress, they will see that people living there are given greater voting strength than they are given at present. In the absence of complete figures as to the quotas for country and city constituencies, I am unable to criticise the proposal as perhaps it ought to be criticised, but I have referred honorable senators to at least three country constituencies in Queensland in which electors are given less voting power than is given to the electors of Brisbane, and if the same principle has been followed in the redistribution of the other States, all I can say is that if these proposals are agreed,



to we are only mouthing when we say that we consider that the primary producer and the man who lives in the country should be given some special protection and assistance. In the proposed redistribution before us, they are given less voting power than is proposed to be given to electors in the city.

Senator PEARCE.—That is not correct.

Senator LYNCH.—Let the Minister give the figures.

Senator PEARCE.—The honorable senator has had them in his possession for a month.

Senator LYNCH.—The Minister has more clerks at his disposal than I have, and he can tell us the quota for country and for city electorates. I have compared Brisbane with three country constituencies in support of what I have said, and I repeat that if the same principle is followed in the proposed redistribution of the other States, it is not justifiable, because it is a vicious principle.

Senator PEARCE (Western Australia)—Minister for Home and Territories [4.2].—Dealing first with Senator Lynch, who complained that he had been supplied with little information, I may say that the honorable senator, in common with every other member of the Senate, received the reports of the Electoral Distribution Commissioners at the end of June, so that he has had a month to study them. If he had studied the Queensland report, he would not have made the statements which he has made.

Senator LYNCH.—I did not get much information from the Minister's speech.

Senator PEARCE.—The honorable senator can read; he has had the reports before him, and has had, perhaps, more time to study them than I have had. He has said that Brisbane is given better representation than the country districts, but he was careful to refer to only two or three country constituencies. Honorable senators will find, on referring to the report, that Brisbane is given 3,438 more electors than Kennedy, and 5,956 more than Maranoa. Taking the city constituencies into account, their average is 40,109 electors, whereas the average of the country constituencies is only 38,768. There is an average of 2,341 more electors for each city constituency in excess of the average for each country constituency.

I come now to Senator MacDonald's feeble echo of Senator Gardiner's charge against the scheme. The honorable sena-

tor was careful to say that he did not intend any reflection on the Redistribution Commissioners. I cannot conceive a more serious reflection on the Commissioners than to suggest that their scheme has been framed to impose a disability on one particular party, and give a political advantage to another. I ascertained by interjection, while Senator MacDonald was speaking, that the Official Labour Government in Queensland has recently had a redistribution of the State electorates. I asked the honorable senator if he was satisfied with the scheme, and he said he was fairly satisfied with it. The singular thing is that these three Commissioners, in carrying out their duties, as stated in paragraph 8, page 7, of their report, took into consideration all the essential factors in endeavouring to arrive at a fair and equitable distribution of the electoral population:—

After due deliberation, Your Commissioners agreed—

- (a) that the State should be so distributed as to provide for three metropolitan and sub-metropolitan divisions, and seven extra-metropolitan divisions; and
- (b) that in framing their proposals, particular attention should be devoted to the adoption, wherever practicable, of the external boundaries of groups of State electorates as the boundaries of divisions, for the purpose of facilitating the establishment of uniform electoral rolls to be used jointly for Commonwealth and State elections.

The Commissioners, who are suspected of party bias by Senator MacDonald, and against whom he has made imputations, actually worked on the data of the perfect scheme drawn up and adopted by the Government of which he is so great an admirer.

Senator GARDINER.—The Minister is referring to a "perfect scheme" which Senator Duncan has called "Theodore's gerrymandered scheme."

Senator PEARCE.—Senator MacDonald is one of "the elect" in Queensland, and therefore he must be accepted as speaking with greater authority and greater knowledge than we presume Senator Duncan to possess. I am answering Senator MacDonald's objections by saying that these Commissioners took as their basis the scheme which he regards as being so perfect.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

## REDISTRIBUTION OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

Motion (by Senator PEARCE) proposed—

That the Senate approves of the distribution of the State of South Australia into electoral divisions as proposed by Messrs. T. E. Day, O. H. Stephens, and J. Gardiner, the Distribution Commissioners for the purpose of distributing the said State into divisions, in their report laid before Parliament on the 29th day of June, 1922, and that the names of the divisions suggested in the report, and indicated in red on the map referred to therein, be adopted.

Senator LYNCH (Western Australia) [4.10].—I wish to find out whether, in making the redistribution for South Australia, the Commissioners adopted the same vicious principle as has been adhered to elsewhere, whereby the electors within the metropolitan area are given more voting power than they are entitled to. Incidentally, I desire to point out that the three metropolitan constituencies referred to by the Minister for Home and Territories (Senator Pearce) are not metropolitan constituencies, because they stretch for many miles into the country. The map of Queensland is a clear contradiction of what the Minister has said. If he cannot find any better reason for asking the Senate to agree to the redistribution of seats in South Australia than he resorted to in the case of Queensland, he has a weak case. If a constituency which stretches its territory 70 miles into the country can be deemed to be metropolitan, then I am finished.

Senator PEARCE (Western Australia—Minister for Home and Territories) [4.11].—The same principle to which I referred in the case of the Queensland redistribution, which Senator Lynch designated as “pernicious,” has been adopted in the case of South Australia. There are fewer electors in the country constituencies than in the city constituencies. Three constituencies in the city have an average of 40,621 electors each, and four constituencies in the country have an average of 38,107 each.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

## REDISTRIBUTION OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

Motion (by Senator PEARCE) proposed—

That the Senate approves of the distribution of the State of Western Australia into electoral divisions as proposed by Messrs. H. S. King, H. R. Way, and J. F. Whitely, the Dis-

tribution Commissioners for the purpose of distributing the said State into divisions, in their report laid before Parliament on the 29th day of June, 1922, and that the divisions referred to in the report, and indicated on the map as A, B, C, D, and E, be named as follows:—

|             |             |
|-------------|-------------|
| Division A— | Perth.      |
| ” B—        | Fremantle.  |
| ” C—        | Kalgoorlie. |
| ” D—        | Swan.       |
| ” E—        | Forrest.    |

Senator DE LARGIE (Western Australia) [4.13].—I consider that the proposed alteration of the names of constituencies will meet with the general approval of every one in the Senate.

Senator MACDONALD.—If we had a Labour representative from Western Australia he would probably think differently.

Senator DE LARGIE.—I do not think so. I say, without fear of successful contradiction, that all the schools of political thought in Western Australia, Labour or otherwise, will approve of honoring the memory of a man whom every one looked up to as a big Australian.

Senator GARDINER.—I think I could discover something that the honorable senator has said in the past that would not accord with what he is saying now.

Senator DE LARGIE.—I have never said that Lord Forrest was other than a big Australian. I know he was an opponent of the Labour party for a very long time; but, putting party politics aside, I think that any one who knew him and his life's work must admit that he was a big Australian and well deserving of any honour that we can extend to him. I have never said an unfair or an ungenerous thing about him or about his record of work as a great Australian. That was beyond reproach. I may have criticised him, but I challenge Senator Gardiner to repeat a single utterance of mine reflecting upon him as other than a big Australian, and I am pleased to see his memory honoured by one of the electoral divisions of his native State being given the name of Forrest.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

## REDISTRIBUTION OF TASMANIA.

Motion (by Senator PEARCE) proposed—

That the Senate approves of the distribution of the State of Tasmania into electoral divisions as proposed by Messrs. E. A. Counsel, J. E. Cathie, and P. C. Douglas, the Distribution Commissioners for the purpose of dis-



tributing the said State into divisions, in their report laid before Parliament on the 29th day of June, 1922, and that the names of the divisions suggested in the report, and indicated in red on the map referred to therein, be adopted.

Senator PAYNE (Tasmania) [4.18].—I have had an opportunity of looking through the proposed redistribution of the electoral divisions of Tasmania, and conferring with some gentlemen there who have taken rather a keen interest in the matter. They have asked me to bring forward a very serious objection, which, I think, they are justified in taking, at all events, to the proposed alteration of two of the divisions in that State. The constituency of Darwin, which embraces the whole of the west and the north-west coast of Tasmania, has been altered to take in portion of Devonport, which is one of the principal towns in the north of the island. The other portion of Devonport remains in the Wilmot Division. Hitherto, that town, which is the largest outside Launceston in the north of the island, has always been included in the division of Wilmot, and it appears strange that, because the River Mersey separates the east from the west portion of the town, the Commissioners should think it necessary to place East Devonport in a different division from West Devonport, the community of interests being identical.

Senator WILSON.—The river gives them a good boundary.

Senator PAYNE.—It may be a convenient boundary, without effecting a fair division, having regard to community of interests. A portion of the city of Launceston has been in the Division of Wilmot, while the great bulk of it has been in the district of Bass. I could understand the Commissioners adopting these boundaries if it were impossible to arrange them otherwise. If East Devonport were taken with West Devonport, it would mean adding about 500 votes to Darwin, and that could be easily adjusted by taking a portion of the Kentish subdivision out of the proposed division of Darwin, and placing it in Wilmot, where it originally was. Bass is situated in the north-eastern portion of Tasmania, and embraces the great bulk of the city of Launceston. It has always had in it the mining districts of Fingal and St. Mary's, known as the subdivision of Fingal. It is now proposed to take Fingal out of Bass, and place it in Wil-

mot. That would immediately destroy the community of interest. Wilmot has always been looked upon as an agricultural district, and Fingal as a mining community. The difficulty could be reasonably overcome, I am informed, by dividing Fingal, transferring a portion of the Lilydale subdivision and the whole of the Georgetown subdivision to Wilmot. Community of interest is the primary consideration that the Commissioners should keep before them. I think I have said sufficient to show that it would be possible to re-adjust the boundaries in a way that would not give any division an undue preponderance of voters.

Senator BAKHAP.—Does your suggestion involve the transfer of the whole of Lilydale?

Senator PAYNE.—No. If Fingal were allowed to remain in Bass, it would only give Bass an advantage of 1,400 voters, and the portion of the electorate proposed to be transferred to Wilmot would just balance that number of voters.

Senator BAKHAP.—The River Tamar has always intervened between the two divisions.

Senator PAYNE.—But natural boundaries should never be allowed to outweigh community of interest.

Senator BAKHAP.—Fingal has been associated with Bass since the establishment of Federation.

Senator PAYNE.—Yes; and furthermore, there are the north-east coast mines, and the whole of the north-eastern belt is a mining district. I shall move that the motion be referred back to the Commissioners.

The PRESIDENT (Senator the Hon. T. Givens).—That course is unnecessary, because, if the motion is not agreed to, the redistribution must be referred back.

Senator PAYNE.—Then I intend to oppose the motion for the reasons I have assigned. I believe the Commissioners have done their best. My protest, as far as Darwin and Wilmot are concerned, was forwarded to the Commissioners, but, unfortunately, it reached them a day or two too late, so that they have not had an opportunity of considering the objection.

Senator MacDONALD (Queensland) [4.29].—I object to the proposed redistribution on behalf of the Labour senators who should be here from Tasmania.

So far from my remarks on this matter being a feeble echo of those of Senator Gardiner, I point out that I take the same attitude on this redistribution question in the party room, and I have had no consultation with Senator Gardiner. During the greater portion of his speech I was absent from the chamber, so I have but a slight idea of what he said. I have no complaints to make concerning the Commissioners. I am acquainted with only one of them, and he is a man of high reputation, but the general opinion of Labour representatives is that under this redistribution the Labour party would stand to lose a number of seats, if the political pendulum took us back to the position that existed in 1913-14. The net result of the scheme is to wipe out two possible Labour seats in Victoria—the Grampians and Corangamite—and to establish a new electorate to be known as Deakin, which may be regarded as an anti-Labour seat. The effect, at any rate, is very unfavorable to the Labour party, and it is evidently desired to keep us from getting into power again.

Senator EARLE.—There is a stronger cause than that.

Senator MACDONALD.—The honorable senator speaks in riddles. If the Labour party had the same political mind as in 1913-14, it would be in an almost impossible position under the proposed redistribution as regards the exercise of political power. No matter how the Labour party might go up under this scheme, there would be very little chance of it gaining political control. With an alteration in the settlement of population other industrial centres may be established in places not at present anticipated, and so alter the position for Labour, though that does not alter the fact that the boundaries of an electorate should not be defined by the cunning trickery of any people.

Senator DE LARGIE.—The honorable senator is having a day out.

Senator MACDONALD.—The honorable senator may be surprised because I am speaking in this way; but there are senators in this Chamber who have taken up much longer time in discussing other matters of less importance than I have taken up to date. If we considered Tasmania from a Labour representative's

point of view, it would be found that the position there is similar to that in New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia. We know what happened in connexion with the Victorian proposal, because the so-called Country party, which has a certain amount of influence with the Government, can force them into—

The PRESIDENT (Senator the Hon. T. Givens).—The honorable senator will not be in order in discussing that motion at this juncture. Any remarks on that proposal should have been made when the question "That the notice of motion be withdrawn" was put.

Senator MACDONALD.—I understand that I have missed my opportunity; but honorable senators are well aware that the position is as I have stated. In concluding I can only voice my objections to the motion. I am sorry that we have not a Tasmanian representative of Labour in this Chamber, because he would be able to put the position more clearly than one resident in another State.

Senator PEARCE (Western Australia—Minister for Home and Territories) [4.37].—Senator Payne stressed the point that community and diversity of interest had apparently been overlooked. The honorable senator, however, lost sight of the obligation which Parliament, by an Act, has laid upon the Commissioners to not only consider community and diversity of interest, but means of communication and physical features. Unfortunately, the position in Tasmania is that there is such a tremendous disparity between electorates that the Commissioners had to take centres of population, or parts of centres of population, and add them to other centres. Between Bass and Darwin there is a difference of 5,000 electors. Between Wilmot and Denison there is a difference of 10,000 electors; between Darwin and Denison there is a similar difference; and between Bass and Wilmot a difference of 5,000. It is obvious, under these conditions, that the Commissioners had to take a portion of Denison away and add it to other electorates. The same can be said in regard to Bass.

Senator PAYNE.—I quite agree with that; but could it not have been done in a better way?



Senator PEARCE.—They had to take away sufficient to add to the other electorates, and as the numbers in the centres of population are not very large, the Commissioners had a very restricted choice. The honorable senator will see that the only case where they have taken a part of a municipality or town has been in the proposed alteration of Darwin, and that has been done in order to make the number equal to what is regarded as a quota. They have taken a portion of Gormanston, Strahan, and Zeehan. In Franklin they have included a portion of Strahan; and, in order to strengthen Wilmot, have taken a portion of Zeehan, Devonport, St. Leonards, and Gormanston, to build up the electorates into something approaching electoral equality. In the cases mentioned by Senator Payne the Commissioners have taken the river as the boundary, and surely that is having regard to physical features. Those who know the electorates must admit that while there is some mining in Darwin, in the portion adjacent to Wilmot community of interest has been considered, as there are small agriculturists and dairy farmers in both districts. It would be unreasonable for the proposals to be rejected because the river, which is a physical feature, has been taken as a boundary. We would be stultifying ourselves if we rejected the proposal on those grounds, and the Commissioners, in having regard to physical features, have obeyed the command of Parliament.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

## ELECTORAL BILL.

### SECOND READING.

Debate resumed from 28th July (*vide* page 915), on motion by Senator PEARCE—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Senator DE LARGIE (Western Australia) [4.46].—The debate in connexion with the redistribution of electoral districts has shown us that, although both Houses have to agree to the proposals of the Commissioners, it is a very good practice for either House to devote most of its attention to those measures which deal with its own particular business.

Senator GARDINER.—The honorable senator must make due allowance for superior outlook and intelligence.

Senator DE LARGIE.—I do not think that Senator Gardiner believes that a very liberal allowance need be made in his case or to the other representative of his party in this Chamber who has spoken concerning the position in the other States in such a way that one would believe that he was a much-travelled person.

Senator MACDONALD.—Well, I have moved about a little.

Senator DE LARGIE.—The portion of the Electoral Bill which affects the election of senators requires special consideration by this Chamber, as it is of more interest to us than to the members of another place. I have always held that a voting system that is suitable for a Lower House should be entirely different from one which concerns an Upper Chamber, and more especially one of the character of this Senate. The Senate is rightly regarded as a States' House, the members of which represent the whole of the people, and who voice more particularly the opinions of the dominant majority of each State, and if we consider the position from that stand-point the portions of the measure which relate to the election of members to this Chamber must receive greater consideration here than in another place. The Senate of the Commonwealth of Australia holds a somewhat unique position among Upper Houses in other parts of the world, and so far as I am aware it is the only Upper House elected by what may be termed the most complete adult suffrage it is possible to extend to the people. Elective Upper Houses in the schemes of most Governments are usually constituted on a more restricted franchise than prevails in the case of the Senate, which is a Chamber of which we should be proud. This Senate is not only an elective one, but its members are returned on the broadest possible franchise it is possible to extend to the people. In fact, in some cases the franchise is broader, from a democratic stand-point, than is the case in connexion with the House of Representatives, which is very unusual. It is more democratic because it speaks for a larger constituency. It represents the whole of a State, and if we consider the case of at least two of six States it will be found that in the Senate those States have twelve representatives while another place has only ten. I am referring now

to the smaller State of Tasmania and the larger State, geographically, of Western Australia. The Senate is a very democratic Chamber, where the franchise is not restricted.

Senator ELLIOTT.—Is it not the contrary?

Senator DE LARGIE.—Not if considered from the stand-point I have mentioned. If Senator Elliott refers to the fact that we have not equal representation for every voter within the Federation, he will see that that furnishes another reason why we should give special attention to the position of the Senate. Had not the principle of equal representation in the Senate been accepted there would have been no Federation. The constitution of this Chamber as a States' House was the key that opened the door to Federation. It was part of the Federal pact, and, as such, we should guard it very carefully. Whatever may be said for proportional representation for the House of Representatives, it cannot possibly be adopted for the Senate, in view of the constitutional position occupied by this Chamber.

Senator GARDINER.—But we take a much wider view of these matters than the framers of the Constitution did twenty years ago.

Senator DE LARGIE.—I do not know that we do. So far as my reading goes, there is no more democratic Upper House in the world than this Chamber, and, therefore, the framers of our Constitution deserve all honour for their breadth of outlook.

Senator GARDINER.—Take one matter only, the question of salaries for members. The framers of the Constitution thought £400 was sufficient, whereas we want £1,000 a year.

Senator DE LARGIE.—I am sorry Senator Gardiner has introduced that matter.

Senator GARDINER.—Surely it can be used as an illustration of a different outlook as to the value of the position.

Senator DE LARGIE.—I was dealing with another matter altogether. The suggestion made by Senator Gardiner is not in accordance with his general attitude, and certainly does him an injustice. Notwithstanding the pamphlets which honorable members receive from time to time, and the articles that one reads in the daily press, written by men who are not sufficiently informed as to the true

position of the Senate, we must, I repeat, be exceedingly careful about the introduction of proportional representation into elections for this Chamber, because the probable consequences would be to alter completely the basis upon which this Chamber was created. At the general elections of 1914 and 1917 and 1920 representation in the Senate was captured by one party. If the Senate is to carry out its true function as a States' House, it should represent the dominant section of the people. Let us, for instance, suppose that a double dissolution follows upon a dispute concerning some important question. Under proportional representation it would be quite possible to have one-half of the Senate returned supporting the Government of the day and the other half supporting the Opposition. In such circumstances responsible government would be impossible. Equally unfortunate would be the result if each of the States returned three Free Traders and three Protectionists. I expect, of course, that during the debate we shall hear a great deal about proportional representation.

Senator GARDINER.—I hope so.

Senator DE LARGIE.—Well, I hope that so far as this Chamber is concerned we shall have nothing to do with the principle, because it would ultimately destroy the position of the Senate as a States' House representing the majority of the people. It would be possible, under proportional representation, to have senators from each State espousing six different sets of opinions, and all more or less representing minorities. Thus the Senate would become a replica of the House of Representatives, and would be furnishing the best possible argument for its abolition.

Senator GARDINER.—Are you in favour of proportional representation?

Senator DE LARGIE.—Not for the Senate.

I desire now to direct attention to the question of marking the ballot-papers. Until the last alteration in our electoral system the marking of ballot-papers for a Senate election was simplicity itself. All that the elector was asked to do was to place a cross opposite the name of any candidate he wished to vote for. There was no ambiguity about the system at all; but in order that the Senate ballot-papers might correspond with ballot-



papers for the House of Representatives, the elector is now required to place the numerals 1, 2, 3 opposite the names of Senate candidates he desires to see returned. We cannot make our voting system too simple. It ought to be easily understood by every elector. The fewer informal votes at each election, the more satisfactory will be the result. The last alteration has not simplified matters for the average elector, nor has it made the position any easier for the returning officer. Every vote should have equal value. In the case of Senate vacancies, ballot-papers marked in order of preference, 1, 2, and 3, should be equal, and counted as a primary vote. We have been told that, in practice, the counting of votes in the order of preference works out as if all the effective votes were of equal value. Possibly the system works out with mathematical precision as stated; but, at all events, it creates an impression that votes are not all of equal value.

Senator DUNCAN.—The first three ought to be counted as No. 1.

Senator DE LARGIE.—Either they should be treated in that way, or the first three should be numbered 3-1, 3-2, 3-3.

Senator ELLIOTT.—But you would not know which vote to cut out among those lower down in the order of preference.

Senator DE LARGIE.—The elector, after having made his choice as to the first three candidates, could mark the other candidates in the order of preference, 4, 5, 6, 7, and so on, though I admit this would make the ballot-paper look somewhat clumsy. Senator Russell, I understand, has given notice of his intention to move as an amendment that the votes on a ballot-paper marked 1, 2, and 3 should be regarded as of equal value. That, I think, would meet the case.

Senator RUSSELL.—My suggestion was not that the voter should vote 1, 1, 1, for the first three candidates of his choice, but that in the counting those ballot-papers marked 1, 2, and 3 should be regarded as No. 1 votes.

Senator DE LARGIE. — I have referred to both methods of marking, and believe that either would do, but we must adopt one if we are going to make the work of voting clear.

I wish to say a word or two in reference to the much-debated question of

grouping candidates on the ballot-papers. In my view that is one of the least important of the amendments of our electoral law proposed by this Bill. At the same time I think that it is an amendment which is very necessary. I can see no objection to it, and I certainly can see no violation of any electoral principle in it. If our object is to make our system of voting clear to the electors in order that they may cast their votes in accordance with their intention, we must see that our system is made as simple as possible. The proposal to group candidates will help in that direction. It is contended that it will introduce party politics into our electoral machinery, but that matters very little because we know that we have party politics, have always had them, and, so far as I can see, we must continue to have party politics in any scheme of government.

Senator WILSON.—We have never yet had party politics recognised by the Crown.

Senator DE LARGIE.—I do not know what the honorable senator means by his expression "recognised by the Crown."

Senator PEARCE.—Party politics were recognised by our law in connexion with the referenda on the conscription question. The leaders of parties were allowed to put their arguments for and against the proposals.

Senator DE LARGIE.—That is quite true. The leaders of the different parties were given an opportunity to put the party views before the electors. That was found to be most satisfactory and met with general approval. Whether the party system is recognised or not, no one can deny or wish to deny its existence. To my mind, it is the only possible system of government in a civilized community. I know of no other that can be substituted for it. We have heard a great deal about the value of the referendum, but in connexion with every referendum we have had in Australia party politics have been as prominent as they have been in connexion with any parliamentary election. The party system has been accepted to such an extent that we cannot hope to do away with it by any amendment of the electoral law.

Senator BARNARD.—The electors elected National candidates throughout Australia,

whilst at the same time they had sufficient intelligence to reject the proposals of the leaders of the National party for the amendment of the Constitution.

Senator DE LARGIE.—That is so. Does Senator Wilson object to belong to a political party?

Senator WILSON.—I object to bringing political parties into the Bill.

Senator DE LARGIE.—If he does, the honorable senator occupies a unique position. Whilst I desire the dominant opinion to be represented in the Senate, I also desire that without any doubt whatever it should be representative of the majority. The party system has so far been the only method suggested by the mind of man for the government of a community such as ours, and how therefore can any one reflect upon the introduction of the party machine into our electoral law? Men are quite proud to be associated with others on an electoral platform as belonging to the same political party. They issue party addresses to the electors, and go the length of issuing "how to vote" cards almost at the doors of the polling booths. They publish party posters throughout the country, and insert party advertisements in the press. In the circumstances, what harm can follow from associating candidates on the same ticket in order to make the position more clear to the elector?

Senator WILSON.—So that they can run in any old thing.

Senator DE LARGIE.—I do not think the proposals will help the candidates in any shape or form.

Senator WILSON.—I am very young in politics, but I think it will.

Senator DE LARGIE.—Perhaps when Senator Wilson has gained a little more experience of parliamentary elections, he will find that it is not easy for "any old thing" to slip into politics. Political accidents of that kind very seldom happen. The honorable senator need not be afraid of the calibre of the men who will be returned to the Senate. He need not fear that "any old thing" will get into the Senate. The man who has to contest a whole State, and run the gauntlet of every section of the community, must possess capacity and character before he can hope to be successful. The grouping

system has my approval. It will clarify the position, and reduce the number of wasted votes. If, as the result of experience, it is shown that any harm is done through the adoption of the system, the electoral law can be altered again as it has been altered before.

Senator WILSON.—The honorable senator is going to vote for the grouping system.

Senator DE LARGIE.—Undoubtedly. I always vote and speak in the same way.

Senator WILSON.—Has the honorable senator always been in favour of the grouping system?

Senator DE LARGIE.—I think so, but we have not always had to consider it.

Senator WILSON.—Will the honorable senator say that he has always favoured it?

Senator DE LARGIE.—I cannot say that I have always favoured it, because it is a somewhat new proposal. However, I am in favour of it now. I do not speak without experience of elections. I know the great difficulty that men, and particularly women, who are not familiar with the names of our public men, have when they are presented with a long list of candidates from which they must select those for whom they desire to vote.

Senator WILSON.—Is it not correct to say that the honorable senator was largely responsible for killing the grouping system when it was last before this Chamber?

Senator DE LARGIE.—I do not think that I have ever been responsible for killing anything or anybody. I am in favour of the grouping system, and of recognising the second and third preferences in the marking of a ballot-paper as equivalent to the first preference. I hope that representatives of the smaller States in the Senate will be particularly careful to have nothing whatever to do with the system of proportional representation, because it is distinctly contrary to the position which the Senate occupies in the scheme of Federation.

Senator ELLIOTT (Victoria) [5.14].—I am entirely opposed to the change in method intended to be inaugurated by clause 3 of the Bill. In my opinion the system of pre-selection by party machines is an evil one. Already a great many of the people of Victoria, at any rate, are



disposed to refuse to have anything further to do with it. It seems to me, however, that by this Bill it is proposed to make the party machine all powerful. If candidates are to be grouped in the way proposed, that will operate inevitably as a suggestion to the electors that they are bound to vote for one or other of the groups.

Senator DUNCAN.—Why so?

Senator GUTHRIE.—They will think so.

Senator ELLIOTT.—They will certainly think so. They will consider that we are forcing this machine system down their throats, and they will blame the Nationalist party for introducing such a system.

Senator WILSON.—Does not the proposal, on the face of it, convey that impression?

Senator ELLIOTT.—It does to my mind. The electors generally will not know every detail of the provisions of the Electoral Acts. All they will have before them will be a ballot-paper, in which three candidates will be included in one group and three in another. They will be branded and labelled, and the electors will be asked to make their choice between the groups. That is a system to which I am altogether opposed. It is true that we have to some extent recognised party politics and political parties before to-day, but this Bill represents the thin end of the wedge for the introduction of the party machine into Parliament. This is a parliamentary recognition of the party machine. The Minister (Senator Pearce) pointed out that it originated in America and met with great success there, but America is a place where the party machine grew into a menace. It was one of the devices intended to perpetuate a party's power for evil. We ought to have nothing whatever to do with it. We should, on the contrary, do everything in our power to prevent the party machine getting a greater hold of our institutions than it has to-day. Only very recently we have seen the scandals which arose in the British Parliament because of the use which the party machine made of the King's prerogative of conferring titles of honour upon eminent men. Parties have seized upon that as a means of extorting huge sums of money that are applied to

forward party aims. That is one example of the evil of exalting the party machine, which this Bill is intended to recognise and uphold.

Senator GARDINER.—Does the honorable senator not think that the best service that many of those "eminent men" render to the State is that they contribute to party funds?

Senator ELLIOTT.—In doing so they certainly render a service to political parties, but it is questionable whether they render a service to the community generally.

I have stated my objection to the principle of grouping embodied in the Bill, but I am opposed to the Bill as it now stands for another reason. I am strongly of opinion that we ought, as soon as possible, to provide for proportional representation in the Senate, and I intend, at the close of my speech, to move that the Bill is unsatisfactory to us because it does not make such provision. I want the great sectional interests of this country, which are not properly represented now, and which, in a democratic system ought to be represented, to be represented here.

Senator DUNCAN.—That sounds peculiar after the honorable senator's declaration against the party machine.

Senator ELLIOTT.—I have said that while party government has been recognised, the party machine has not; and I desire to keep the party machine from being recognised. While saying this, I nevertheless consider it essential that we should make provision for the proper representation of sectional interests in Parliament. Under the present system, sectional interests get no representation. There is no doubt that, at the last election, the Country party commanded a very great deal of support, but its interests are not in the least represented here to-day.

Senator GUTHRIE.—I object to that statement. I represent the producers of Victoria, just as much as does any Farmers Union man, even with the brand upon him.

Senator ELLIOTT.—That remark is correct. While we stated in our election campaign that we were prepared to represent those interests, there were, nevertheless—as appeared from the voting—a great number of people who would have

preferred to send in their direct representatives, and return my honorable colleague, Senator Guthrie, as a second string.

Senator COX.—Do I understand the honorable senator to say that he promised the Country party that he would support them?

Senator ELLIOTT.—We promised the primary producers that we would represent their interests to the best of our ability. One cannot say that the great industrial interests of this country—although so ably represented in this Chamber by the Leader of the Opposition (Senator Gardiner)—are adequately represented here. While that may be satisfactory to us as a party for the moment, it may not be so satisfactory to us in the future. The tendency everywhere is for the great cities to grow, and for Labour and industrial interests to get power in such cities into their own hands. It may happen that cities like Melbourne and Sydney, with their huge preponderance of industrial voters, may get the absolute control of Senate elections for the States of Victoria and New South Wales. Country interests would then be absolutely and totally unrepresented. Although that is stating an extreme case, it may be realized at any time. Now is our opportunity, when the National party is in power, to guard against the possibility, and to insure that every large interest is adequately represented. Nothing less is worthy of us here in the Senate. It was said by the last speaker that we would be split up into a number of little sections, all of which would be fighting one another. That is not possible where only three men are being elected, and the smaller sections would be obliged to indicate their preferences in some way for the people representing the larger sections. The principle of proportional representation is making steady progress in the countries of the world. It has been adopted in the latest of the Dominions that have been granted practical independence within the British Empire. In Ireland, both the North and South Parliaments are elected on the system of proportional representation. I have heard that the recent elections there were entirely satisfactory. At any rate, the adoption of the system had the effect of totally defeating the attempt that was made to “rig” the election by the political

parties of the time, the anti-Treaty-ites and the Treaty-ites. There was a great return of representatives of the Farmers and Labour parties, who were not previously represented in the Provisional Convention.

Senator DE LARGIE.—Does the honorable senator say that both the political parties were against the Treaty?

Senator ELLIOTT.—No. The De Valera-ites were against the Treaty, and the Collins party were for the Treaty; but they arranged between themselves that they would not stand against each other, so that the new Parliament would be exactly the same as the Convention. The proportional system having been adopted, however, that arrangement went by the board, and the opponents of the Treaty, instead of getting a “walk-over,” as they had hoped for, were defeated by the great body of public opinion, which returned sectional representatives in the farmers and labour men. That is how the present position has been brought about. The desperate opponents of the Treaty said they would not take a hand in the Parliament, and turned to arms. These facts are an argument in favour of proportional representation as defeating any attempt to “rig” the elections by means of the party machines.

Senator DE LARGIE.—Does the honorable senator favour proportional representation for the Senate?

Senator ELLIOTT.—I do, because I think it is unfair that my friend, the Leader of the Opposition, should have to carry the weight of representing alone, or practically alone, the great body of the industrial workers. The change to proportional representation might be disadvantageous to my party at the present time, but I am sure that the ultimate result would be beneficial to all. I think that if other parties were more adequately represented here the Government would be compelled to pay greater attention to the dignity of the Senate. They have removed from Ministers in this Chamber practically every important portfolio, and if they did not get so much of their own way they would be compelled to pay greater deference to us. In order to give effect to my beliefs, I move—

That all the words after the word “That” be left out, with a view to insert in lieu



thereof the words: "the Bill is unsatisfactory to the Senate inasmuch as it does not provide for proportional representation."

• Senator DE LARGIE.—That sounds like a vote of want of confidence in the Government.

Senator ELLIOTT.—There is no such intention. I hope that the Government will so amend this Bill that it will be acceptable to those of us who believe that we should provide in a democratic manner for the representation in the Senate of all interests.

Senator LYNCH (Western Australia) [5.33].—I second the motion *pro forma*, because, while I disagree with the objections to the Bill entertained by Senator Elliott, I have special reasons of my own for desiring the rejection of the measure. I particularly object to what I would regard as a blot upon our electoral system—the group or ticket system of voting. We have been experimenting during the past twenty-one years in connexion with our electoral laws, and it is well for honorable members to recall the fact that the plumping system introduced in the early days by one party, and looked to for salvation by that party, was at another time considered by the same party to be the bane of its existence. Plumping made it possible for the return of senators professing what were then known as the clear and undiluted principles of the Labour party. Those representatives found themselves here by virtue of the inclusion of the principle of plumping in our electoral legislation. Later on the anti-Labour party, which had resisted the introduction of the plumping system, clamoured for it. It is equally true that, with regard to the postal vote, we have been tinkering with our legislation. The utmost opportunity was given to people to vote by post, and after that system had been in operation for some time, it was recognised that it was liable to such gross abuse that we nearly had to abandon it. It has been so modified that it is now unrecognisable as compared with its original form.

So far as the postal vote and plumping are concerned, public opinion is not very mature, and now we are invited to adopt the group system. Throughout our experience as a Commonwealth the party system has proved an evil—perhaps

a necessary evil, but an evil just the same. I do not know whether the trouble is more manifest now than it was at the inception of the Federation; but we are asked to make an innovation that is at once most uncalled for and pernicious. In the country where it has been tried extensively the people are turning their backs upon it. I need not say that the system is borrowed from the United States of America, where it has been in operation for many years. I propose to quote the late Viscount Bryce to show what has taken place in America owing to the tendency to encourage and solidify the party system. If we desire politics in Australia to be preserved from the discouraging features of American politics, we ought to endeavour to keep the party system under. I am quite aware that I shall be asked how it is possible to get on without that system. While it is impossible under present conditions, it is our duty to discourage party government and the party system as much as possible. My ideal is that this Chamber should consist of thirty-six independent members.

Senator PEARCE.—There is a fair amount of independence manifested in this Chamber now, and the honorable senator is not the least striking example of it.

Senator LYNCH.—I hope to see that independence more pronounced than ever. I am trying to do my share in that direction, as one who believes that this Chamber has come to stay as an integral portion of our constitutional system. Notwithstanding all the press and other criticisms from outside, this is the one Chamber that springs from and represents the deliberate choice of the people. It enables them to search out from amongst themselves the best and most approved types of their kind, who come here as national representatives, and register their opinions in the country's interests. It is true, as I have said on a previous occasion, that the Senate does not contain an array of great statesmen, such as it once boasted of; but it is equally true that the present mediocre members are just as necessary to the carrying on of the government of Australia, and they have been called upon to remedy conditions brought about by the actions of the statesmen of by-gone times. It would be a fell day for this

country if its representative institutions had to be subjected to any form of under-rating that would prevent representative government, and particularly majority rule, from prevailing. It would certainly be a downward step to lose hold of the high niche to which the race has been raised by the efforts of our forefathers.

I oppose this Bill not exactly for the reasons outlined by Senator Elliott, but because of the blot it contains in the shape of the group system. I believe that system came into vogue in the early days of the United States of America, following closely upon the revolution, and it has slowly become part and parcel of the American system of government. It is plainly admitted there to-day that a really high-class man, in the political sense, is in a hopeless position as a candidate for the Presidency, because the party system is so much encouraged that it is useless for a man of outstanding civic virtue and merit to offer his services as an independent candidate. Seeing that under this system good men are debarred in the United States of America, we should be very wary before introducing the very thing that has prevented the most able citizens from receiving the highest office in the gift of the people of that land. Viscount Bryce has a very interesting chapter as to why the able men are not coming forward. He points out that when the big figures, such as Washington, Webster, Franklin, and others, had vanished from the scene there was, up to, the time of the American War, almost a barren period, wherein no men of particular distinction came forward to reach the presidential chair. Every crisis brings out a country's best men, but there is no reason why, even in quiet times, we should not have the advantage of the services of the most capable and distinguished people amongst us. Viscount Bryce, in his chapter in *The American Commonwealth*, headed, "Why great men are not chosen for the Presidency," says—

Because in America party loyalty and party organization have been hitherto so perfect that any one put forward by the party will get the full party vote if his character is good and his "record," as they call it, unstained. The safe candidate may not draw in quite so many votes from the moderate men of the other side as the brilliant one would, but he will not lose nearly so many from his own ranks. Even those who admit his mediocrity will vote straight when the moment for voting comes.

*Senator Lynch.*

Thus it is seen that the grouping system favours the man of mediocre talents, and allows the man of high capacity to be rejected. Viscount Bryce further says—

An eminent American is reported to have said to friends who wished to put him forward, "Gentlemen, let there be no mistake. I should make a good President, but a very bad candidate."

Senator GARDINER.—Has not the party machine in America produced a long list of distinguished Presidents?

Senator LYNCH.—We are living in an age of evolution, in a time when Senator Gardiner and every other man should wish to see the best men win; but this system, a leading element of which we are asked to implant in our legislation, has had the effect of handicapping the best talent in the community. If there are candidates of outstanding capacity, let them come forward and be enlisted under the banner of national duty. This system, according to the high authority I have quoted, is barring their way. What is done during a great crisis in the British Empire? Did they during the war period depend upon the slow and cumbersome method of selecting men by party machinery? Not at all. They said, "Now we are in the hour of our darkest peril, and, although our party machinery is here, we must go outside the ordinary routine and select the best men to guide this country." Honorable senators know what the practice then was. Elections had nothing to do with it, because the necessities of the nation were very pressing, and the most suitable men had to be selected. They were not obtained through the ballot-box.

Senator DUNCAN.—Lloyd George was elected through the ballot-box.

Senator LYNCH.—What is the use of irrelevant interjections of that nature, when the honorable senator knows that under the direction of Lloyd George's Government the ballot-box was ignored, and the services of such men as Sir Auckland Geddes and others were secured? We have not to look far to find that Parliaments have departed from the practice of seeking their best men through the ballot-box.

Senator MACDONALD.—Does the honorable senator suggest that we should have men who are prepared to ride over every one and everything?

Senator LYNCH.—I am simply directing attention to the practice in other



countries, and the interjection of the honorable senator clearly discloses the great gulf which exists between us. I have already shown that the ballot-box is not the expedient by which any country can secure its best advisers and counsellors. The grouping system has been borrowed from the United States of America, a country which borrowed from Australia the ballot system, and we are going back and adopting a system which is waning in favour in other countries, where it has been tried and has failed. It would be well to remind honorable senators who are not well acquainted with the fact that party government, discipline, and management has been a fine art in the United States of America, above all other countries in the world, where everything is regimentalized and directed by local enactments. The States enact laws for the control and management of primaries equivalent to our Labour leagues and National organizations. Just imagine a Parliament in this country turning its attention from the more important issues before it and getting down to framing Statutes for regulating and controlling the administrative machinery of the humblest political organization in the country! That is what has been done in the United States of America, but there is now a revulsion of feeling against such a practice. Honorable senators know that nearly every State in the Union has passed statutory laws regulating the control of political organizations, and have placed upon them the imprimatur of authority to the detriment of more important subjects. This revulsion of feeling has arrived, and it is well to remember that in the world's affairs we always wait until the danger is upon us and the crisis arrives before a change is made. On page 240 of Cleveland's *Organized Democracy*, we find the following:—

#### IGNORING OF PARTY DESIGNATIONS.

The above systems of nomination recognise only party nominations. There is a growing tendency to abolish all party recognition in municipal elections. In Des Moines, candidates for municipal offices appear upon the primary ballots without any party designations. The two leading candidates of the primary elections for each office are placed upon the general election ballot, thus assuring majority choice at the general election. In a majority of cities where party recognition has been abolished, the primary election is done away with entirely, and the candidates appear upon the general election ballot by position only.

This method is now in use in Boston and many small cities.

Senator ROWELL.—That is in connexion with municipal elections.

Senator LYNCH.—Yes; it must be understood that municipal government in the United States of America is very important, and the policy of party recognition in the United States has been abolished by the people after being tried for sixty or seventy years. We should now ask ourselves whether we are going to introduce a system which has been tried and which has failed in other places. If it can be shown that it is an advantage, well and good. Dealing with the essentials of the proposal itself, I can quote other statements by Viscount Bryce which are equally emphatic and convincing to show how party recognition by legislatures has been overdone. On page 92, volume 2, of Viscount Bryce's standard work, *The American Commonwealth*, we find the following:—

Apart, however, from this objection, Europeans whose habit of regarding party organization as a purely voluntary matter and parties as fluid and changing, not solid and permanent entities, makes them averse to any legal recognition of parties as concrete and authoritative bodies existing within the community, are disposed to ask whether these laws may not be a sort of counsel of despair, an abandonment by the good citizens of their old hope of extinguishing or superseding the machine altogether by the voluntary and unfettered action of the voters themselves.

That is Viscount Bryce's opinion of what is happening in America. Quite apart from the general aspects of the case, we are endeavouring to superimpose upon our electoral machinery something entirely foreign and totally unnecessary in dealing with intelligent people. We are told that one of the reasons for its introduction is to avoid mistakes. Will it be contended for a moment that it is not within the power of the average elector to select the names of three senators from a list of candidates which may number twenty or perhaps thirty? Is human fallibility so marked that it is beyond the power of an elector to vote for the representatives of his party without embodying such a proposal as this in our electoral law. Mistakes, I know, are made, and I can recall instances where informal votes were recorded in ballots taken in this Chamber. How are we to remedy it? Are we to say, in view of the number

of informal votes recorded at elections, that many of the people cannot read plain English. What sort of admission is that for us to make, having regard to our system of free education? If we do this we may find ourselves charged with ignorance and incompetence, and there will be ground for such a charge. It has been said in support of this preposterous proposal that the grouping system will not help one party more than another. But where will it lead. Is there to be any limitation to which parties can be subjected? We have now representatives of the Country, Nationalist, Labour, and Socialist parties, and quite a number of others of lesser importance, seeking political honours. Goodness knows how many more parties will arise if they are entitled to be grouped under the provisions of this Bill. Are we going to superimpose upon our electoral system something more confusing and more complex than anything there is to-day? What does the grouping system mean? In order to determine how one group shall take precedence over another, there are no less than thirteen clauses and sub-clauses to regulate this ultra-complex innovation in our electoral law. When we are discussing this particular clause, I shall have more to say, and shall endeavour to obtain additional information from the Minister. Who is to decide if, say, John Smith is to attach his name to one group or the other? Who will say that he shall not be grouped with the representatives of a particular party?

Senator DUNCAN.—The other members of the group will decide that.

Senator LYNCH.—Where will he be if they refuse to admit him?

Senator FAIRBAIRN.—An independent.

Senator LYNCH.—Yes, at the tail end.

Senator DE LARGIE.—He may be at the top.

Senator LYNCH.—No; the groups take precedence, and he will be among the nondescripts or independents at the tail end. We have had members in this Parliament who were not prepared to attach themselves to any political party; but we are deliberately providing in this Bill that their place shall be at the bottom of fifteen, twenty, or, perhaps, forty, names. Is that the way to treat independent candidates? If we had men

of the Lloyd George calibre in this country who would refuse to associate themselves with any grouping system they would be at the tail end. Are we justified in saying that independent candidates shall be placed at the bottom of the list? That is where we shall be placing them.

Senator MACDONALD.—That is where they will want to be.

Senator LYNCH.—I quite realize what the honorable senator means.

Senator GARLING.—Cannot the honorable senator rely upon the intelligence of the electors?

Senator LYNCH.—I am prepared to credit them with more intelligence than this proposal does.

Senator GARLING.—Will not the electors select an independent candidate if they wish to vote for him?

Senator LYNCH.—That is what they can do under the present system. Why alter it?

Senator GARDINER.—He would be in the same position as a man whose name began with, say, W.

Senator LYNCH.—No system should treat an independent man, who is the salt of political life, in this way. Every independent man should have the fullest opportunity for the expression of his views. Let us suppose that a man whose name was Abraham Anderson declared his independence of party nomination. Where would he be put on the ballot-paper under this grouping system?

Senator DE LARGIE.—At the top.

Senator LYNCH.—No. He would be down at the bottom amongst those candidates whose names might begin with Z. Under the operation of these thirteen clauses, the unfortunate returning officer would be called upon to determine the rival claims of candidates, and would be obliged to put Abraham Anderson, an independent candidate, right down amongst those at the bottom of the list. This is an innovation that I am not prepared to adopt unless it can be shown clearly and definitely that we shall be doing wrong to no man. We have been told that the grouping system is to be introduced in order to obviate informalities at elections. But rather would I allow that blot to remain upon our electoral system than that we should introduce a system which has been tried and rejected in America.



We in this Chamber are on a pedestal, because we are the recognised advocates and mouth-pieces of the several States that sent us here. Let any honorable senator say he is prepared to run counter to the interests of his State in any substantial degree, and very quickly his place will be not inside but outside these walls. This is a States House. We who are its members are the avowed representatives of the States, and if we adopt this grouping system we shall be doing no good service to this Chamber, which takes, as it is expected to take, the widest possible view of National politics, placing always the interests of State above the interests of party. Are we to subordinate the interests of this country to the interests of party? We have passed through two quinquennial periods of strenuous party strife, but we are sobering up now, and the time is coming when the development of each State should be allowed to proceed along lines to be determined by the people themselves. The States should revolve upon their own axis. They must not be fused, and should not lose their identity in the Federation. If a member of this Chamber is asked, "What are you?" he will, of course, prefer to say, "I am a member of the Senate of the Commonwealth," rather than that "I am a member of a certain political party."

Senator GARLING.—But what is party, after all?

Senator LYNCH.—The honorable senator asks me, What is party? I remind him that, during the war period, party considerations counted for nothing. When the enemy were knocking at our gates in the distance, party considerations counted for nothing. Why, then, should we introduce into our electoral system something that has been abandoned by progressive peoples elsewhere?

Senator GARLING.—Will you run without a party at the next election?

Senator LYNCH.—I do not know whether I shall be running or not.

I have already admitted that the party system is bad. The national welfare will not be served by this attempt to ingraft it upon our electoral system. There is no guarantee that its adoption will lead to fewer informal votes, and as for the smooth working of an election, I do not

know what will be the position of a returning officer, or how he will determine a demand by a candidate to be attached to any particular party. Who is to be the umpire? If, for instance, a candidate declares that he wishes to be grouped as a Labour candidate without the sanction or indorsement of the Labour executive, who is to say him nay? If we say that, notwithstanding our advanced educational system, our own people are incapable of picking out three names of candidates on a ballot-paper, and that in order to avoid informalities we must group the candidates according to parties, we shall label ourselves as a nation of ignoramuses. I am not prepared to do that. The proposal should be rejected because it will elevate the party system. I could submit quotation after quotation from the authorities to whom I have already referred, showing that this system has been rejected by every other progressive community in the world. If we want to keep this Chamber on a pedestal in the eyes of the people, as a States House, we will reject the group system as embodied in this measure. If, on the other hand, we want to put the interests of party before the interests of the nation, then, of course, we shall adopt it. If we are to be wise in our generation we will discard this discredited innovation because it will be nothing more nor less than a blot upon our electoral system, which has worked fairly well up to the present.

Senator PEARCE (Western Australia—Minister for Home and Territories) [6.17].—I appeal to Senator Elliott to withdraw his amendment. I understand that he is dissatisfied because the Bill does not provide for proportional representation; but if he wishes to test the feeling of the Senate on that question, the Bill will not prevent him from doing so. Senator Russell has already availed himself of the opportunity. Senator Elliott may not be able again to speak to the Bill, but he may get another honorable senator to submit a motion giving an instruction to bring before the Committee that section of the Act which deals with the system of voting. I shall not oppose any such action, and the Committee will, therefore, have an opportunity to record a straight-out vote for or against proportional representation. This will not place any honorable senators in a false position, and I am sure Senator Elliott does not

wish to do that. Possibly, some honorable senators are in favour of proportional representation, and yet may be in favour of some of the provisions of this Bill. Even if Senator Elliott's amendment were carried, it would not further the cause of proportional representation.

The PRESIDENT (Senator the Hon. T. Givens).—The Minister is in error when he says that Senator Elliott has lost his opportunity to take any action. He may give notice of a contingent motion to be moved when the second reading of the Bill has been carried.

Senator PEARCE.—That being so, I invite Senator Elliott not to press his amendment.

Senator GARDINER (New South Wales) [6.20].—One can always listen with pleasure to the enthusiastic eloquence of Senator Lynch. There is always something in what the honorable senator has to say, and the manner in which he says it commends it to one's attention. I listened with pleasure to the honorable senator denouncing the party system with all the vigour of a most earnest nature, but I thought that if I felt as keenly on the party system as the honorable senator does, I could suggest a course of action for him to take. He will not be a candidate at the next Senate election for Western Australia, but I suggest to him that he might resign his position in the Senate as a party man, and see what the electors of Western Australia will think of him as an opponent of the party system. Within the next six months, probably, he will be afforded an opportunity to stand on the high pedestal upon which he would place the rest of us, as a man who refuses to continue to sit in this Chamber as a nominee of a political party. There is no member of the Senate who is not a direct representative of the party system. When Senator Lynch quotes the opinion of great men on the party system of America, he commends rather than condemns the system. I would like the honorable senator to mention the name of one great man who, in the last fifty years, has been prevented from becoming President of the United States of America because of the party system. The system has given that country some very remarkable men. The party system has found its highest development in Great Britain, which has set an example to the world in

the management of parliamentary government. What has tended most to secure for the British Parliament the title of the "Mother of Parliaments" has been the departure from the old system of the selection of the Government by the Monarch. Gradually, and with the effluxion of time, and the crystallization of public opinion in Great Britain they have reached a system under which the members of the Imperial Parliament form themselves into parties, and there is a distinct division in the Parliament itself, with a Government on one side and an Opposition on the other. This has tended to keep parliamentary government pure in Great Britain. It is true that some things of a not very creditable character may have taken place, but we should look at the system of government as a whole, and if we read history rightly we have reason to be intensely gratified at the success which has followed the adoption of the party system in Great Britain.

It is contended that the Bill proposes to introduce the party system into our Electoral Act.

Senator LYNCH.—To give it a legal benediction.

Senator GARDINER.—What is proposed by the group system will be of the greatest convenience to the electors. What will be the difference between the ballot-paper that will be placed before the electors, should this Bill become law, and that which has been placed before them in the past?

Senator BAKHAF.—What is proposed is really not a grouping system, but a very undesirable labelling system.

Senator GARDINER.—I want to get at the point. It is of no use for honorable senators to discuss the measure with a preconceived idea of what is proposed if they do not take the trouble to read the Bill. I have here an example of the ballot-paper to be issued under the provisions of this measure. It contains eleven names, and I want honorable senators to consider what would be the difference between the ballot-papers issued in each case if a similar number of candidates sought election for the same seat under the existing law.

Senator BAKHAF.—A very considerable difference.

Senator GARDINER.—The difference would be merely that should the Bill pass,



the party candidates will form themselves into groups, and immediately before the name of a candidate the letter "A," the letter "B," or the letter "C," and so on, will appear. That will not interfere with the freedom of the voter to indicate his preferences in any way he pleases.

Senator PEARCE.—He need not give a party vote at all.

Senator GARDINER.—Of course he need not. Under the old system, candidates whose surnames commenced with the letters "Z," "Y," or "W" have had their names appearing at the bottom of the ballot-paper. If the grouping system is adopted such persons may find their names included in the "A" group or the "B" group. Will that be in any way injurious to candidates? I do not think it will, and, personally, I think that the position in which a candidate's name appears on the ballot-paper makes very little difference.

Senator BAKHAP.—That is contrary to the argument of those who advocate the grouping system.

Senator GARDINER.—I want to emphasize the fact that the only difference in the ballot-paper which will follow from the adoption of the grouping system will be the placing of the letters "A," "B," "C," "D," and so on, in front of the names of the candidates, and a candidate whose name might otherwise appear at the bottom of the ballot-paper may find it included in a list at the top.

Senator BAKHAP.—All the electors are to be put in the alphabetical class.

Senator GARDINER.—I remind the honorable senator that all the electors are placed alphabetically on the electoral rolls. In the State which I represent, the electors will find a way in which to vote for those whom they desire to see returned, no matter in what position their names appear on the ballot-paper. There are party organizations in all the States, and the electors vote according to party views. The Senate will not be going out of its way should it decide to make it easier for the electors to do so. It is suggested that some difficulty arises where the names of candidates are very similar, though they may belong to different parties. I know that at the last election it was suggested that my name appearing on the ballot-paper after the names of Cox and Duncan and

immediately preceding that of Garling, I received a great many votes that were intended for Mr. (now Senator) Garling. It was claimed that electors who were opposed to me voted for me and left Mr. Garling out.

Senator GARLING.—No; they put me in with Messrs. Grant and McDougall.

Senator GARDINER.—At the election Senator Garling received less than 6,000 first preference votes, owing to the fact that the party to which he belonged gave 240,000 first preference votes to Senator Cox. To prove that there is anything in the statement that I received Senator Garling's votes to secure my position, it would be necessary to prove that the name of Gardiner is more like the name Garling than the name Garling is like the name Gardiner. If, in the one count, I received his votes because of the similarity of our names, surely in the first preference votes he should have received mine.

*Sitting suspended from 6.30 to 8 p.m.*

Senator GARDINER.—The only question for argument regarding this new ballot-paper is that it proposes to change the order in which the names may appear upon it. Instead of being in alphabetical order, the names will be alphabetically arranged according to groups. The paper will be no different from the old ballot-paper, except for that change and the addition of the letters "A," "B," "C," "D," "E," &c., to the candidates' names. The electors will have the same wide choice of individual men as they have to-day.

Senator GARLING.—Why not mark the name of the parties on the ballot-paper instead of using only letters?

Senator GARDINER.—The use of a letter would simplify the ballot-paper; the use of the names of parties would confuse the electors. Before the dinner adjournment I was quoting the fact that Senator Garling and I were running at the last election, and I claimed that the similarity of our names made no difference to the result of the poll. I am using that as an illustration. I find that of the first preference votes Senator Garling got 5,949. My vote was 113,000. I am not using that as an argument adverse to him, because in a large part of New South Wales I was given No. 1 by my party, and in no part of New South Wales was he given No. 1 by his party. If,

outside the organized party voters, there were only 5,949 people who would vote for Senator Garling in preference to me, it would not be much of a compliment to him to say that part of that number belonged to me, but was given to him by mistake. More votes could only have gone to Senator Garling by mistake than came to me by mistake if the name of Gardiner is more like Garling than Garling is like Gardiner.

Senator ROWELL.—Could not the honorable senator have got Senator Garling's third vote?

Senator GARDINER.—I certainly did not get Senator Garling's third vote when he and I were running off. The figures are worth looking at when we are considering an amending Electoral Act. I find that when my colleagues, ex-Senators Grant and McDougall, dropped out, Senator Duncan benefited practically to the extent of over 2,000 votes. My colleagues had between them 190,000 votes, and Senator Garling improved his position by a little over 3,000, showing that even the names of Duncan and Garling made very little difference. In the final count, when Mr. Falkiner, the Country candidate, dropped out, his large vote of 136,000 was distributed. Of those Senator Garling received 99,336, while I got 34,277. I think that was a very fair division of Mr. Falkiner's votes. They were really the votes which, in the final count with Senator Garling and myself, ended the election. When we are considering the form of a ballot-paper for the electors, we can quite well leave it to their intelligence to find out for whom they want to vote. They do not make any mistakes. If any one will go through the State voting, as I have done, he will be surprised at the intelligent following of their parties by the whole of the electors of the Commonwealth.

Senator WILSON.—In the face of that argument the honorable senator is surely not supporting this proposal.

Senator GARDINER.—In the face of that argument I am supporting it. This ballot-paper no more introduces party politics into the electoral system than does the present ballot-paper.

Senator WILSON.—I have never heard a more forcible argument against the proposal than that put forward by the honorable senator.

Senator GARDINER.—It needed no forcible argument to put Senator Wilson

against it. There is nothing on the proposed ballot-paper in the nature of a party inducement or a party statement. The candidates are grouped according to the orders of their party; but there is nothing on the paper to show whether they are Nationalists, Labour supporters, or Socialists. I have no objection to the party system; in fact, I have a great deal to thank it for. I never would have been in politics, and would not be in the Senate to-day, but for it. I think most honorable senators will say the same thing. There may be some who have exceptional ability, and would get into the Senate anyhow; but most of us realize that, but for the party system, the marvellous ability that we possess would never have been recognised by the public outside. I cannot help referring to Senator Lynch's enthusiastic attack on the party system. With what is he going to replace the party system?

Senator LYNCH.—Common sense.

Senator GARDINER.—He will have a very great difficulty in finding enough Western Australians to win all the seats in the other States. Judging by Senator Lynch and the other representatives from that State, it is to Western Australia alone that we must look for common sense. Senator Lynch most eloquently denounces the system under which we were all elected, but he sat down without saying one word to indicate in the most vague way what he would propose to take its place. How did the party system originate? It originated by the steady growth of attention paid to the electoral system by the outside public. It was the outside public that created parties. The parties are the machines for sifting the grain; and will Senator Lynch say that if he is going to sow a crop of wheat he will not have anything to do with the new-fangled machines that separate the good grain from the bad? In farming there are means of winnowing grain before it is sown, and the party machines winnow the grain of politics. Can any man live in the public life of this country and do anything which discredits him in the eyes of his country or his party? If he does so, the party is a machine which is ready to displace him. I am quite sure that any human system will have its defects. With a little effort and practice I think I could use any existing system. Before



I condemn a system, I want to know whether the country has yet developed anything better to take its place. As soon as the free and independent electors outside Parliament—and they are very free and very independent—say that they have had enough of the party system, then it will go. The more I become acquainted with the party system, the more I realize that, however much we may complain about it when it does not suit us, the civilized world has very much to thank it for. It would be a very great loss, say, to the public life of this country if Senator Lynch, in his independence, grew to such an extent intellectually and otherwise that he despised parties, and said to the electors of Western Australia, “I will consider no party. I will not act in accordance with the dictates of the will of any party. I am going to Parliament as an independent man to vote as Senator Lynch thinks right upon every question that comes along.” His would be an ideal position, if he could get here; and it would be an ideal position when he was here. But what is the use of trying to achieve the impossible? We have before us now a Bill containing an innocent proposal to alter the ballot-paper by breaking away from the old system, and arranging the names in groups in alphabetical order, with letters of the alphabet against each name. Honorable senators say that this would mean the introduction of the party machine into the polling booth; but I am very dubious about that.

I now come to the question of proportional voting. On the whole, I am against it. It may be that I have not studied the question well enough. It may be that I am rather Conservative in regard to the things with which I do not agree. If I had to choose an ideal system of elections for any Parliament, I should choose the good old system of “first past the post.” That obtains in England at the present time, and I think we should get representative Parliaments by it. But it is not what we desire. I recognise that the question of preferential voting has come to stay. When first introduced into this House, I made a slight effort to stop it. I might have succeeded but for the brutality of the President. Unfortunately he, using, very properly, the powers which this House has conferred upon him, broke

down my efforts by a physical strain that I could not continue under. During the dinner adjournment my colleagues would not allow me to continue. They said that preferential voting allowed the majority to be represented, and they were going to stick to it. The question of proportional representation is now raised. If there is any Parliament in existence, or any House elected by the people, where proportional representation could be used with less evil effects than anywhere else, I believe that it is in the Senate elections. One very grave objection to it in the House of Representatives would be that, in the event of a by-election, the people would be robbed of their right to fill the vacancy.

Senator PAYNE.—No.

Senator GARDINER.—Under the proportional system, as applied in Tasmania and New South Wales, there would be no method by which an extraordinary vacancy in the House of Representatives could be filled by the vote of the people. As far as the Senate is concerned, that objection to the system does not exist, because such vacancies are filled by the State Parliaments. Whether we make proportional representation the law for the election of the Senate, or whether we go to the country under the present conditions, or in accordance with the present measure, without proportional representation, I think there will be enough common sense—and, shall I say, generosity—on the part of the people to see that this House is not composed of the representatives of one party only, or does not consist of thirty-four representatives of one party and two of another.

Senator BAKHAP.—Those of us who advocate proportional representation wish to see equitable justice.

Senator GARDINER.—I have recognised the fairness of proportional representation as applied to the Senate, but, with parties as at present constituted, is it likely to make matters any better for them? In this Chamber the Country party representative is a Nationalist. Senator Wilson is as Conservative as possible, and is always prepared to give a vote against the progressive interests of the country.

Senator MACDONALD.—He is against the Commonwealth Shipping Line.

Senator GARDINER.—He is against everything by which the Commonwealth

Democracy will benefit. I have heard some honorable senators contend that speck States like Tasmania are entitled to the same representation in the Senate as the big States.

Senator BAKHAP.—The United Kingdom itself consists of specks like that. Tasmania would not have joined the Federation if it had not been allowed the same number of seats in the Senate as the other States. We are still a sovereign State.

Senator GARDINER.—That shows the selfishness of some people.

Senator BAKHAP.—We had to be separated from the big States to get decent legislative attention to our own needs.

Senator GARDINER.—The small States cannot expect the intelligence of a growing Australian Democracy to continue such an absurd system.

Senator BAKHAP.—You cancel the contract, and Tasmania will resume its original position as a sovereign State under the British Crown.

Senator GARDINER.—The contract is drawn up in such a simple manner that the people themselves can alter it. The time is not far distant when every State will be part of Australia, and when every man will be an Australian, and not a State's representative. When that time comes unification will have superseded the Federation. Surely nobody will say that our Constitution is fixed and unalterable. We may alter it under the measure we are now considering.

Senator WILSON.—Surely on your speech you will favour proportional representation?

Senator GARDINER.—I am not much against it, but I find myself in a difficult position, public interests conflicting with personal advantage.

There are one or two provisions in the Bill that need serious attention. We should not get excited over the form and shape of the ballot-paper and pass a measure for which we may be sorry afterwards. I realize that this is a machinery Bill, which can be best dealt with in Committee, but it would be a great mistake, in my opinion, to enlarge the powers of returning officers in asking questions of electors. If there is one thing more than another that we should guard against in electoral matters, it is the tendency to in-

terfere with the voters' right to exercise the franchise independently.

Senator THOMAS.—Do you believe in an elector voting early and often?

Senator GARDINER.—No; nor do I agree that a returning officer should be allowed to brow-beat an elector, and do anything that might prevent him from voting. If a returning officer is in doubt as to whether a person is entitled to vote he should be allowed to require the elector to sign a declaration. But we should be very cautious about increasing the limited number of questions a returning officer is now permitted to put to the elector. He should certainly not be allowed to harass him. A voter, under this proposal, could be asked if his place of living was "*bonâ fide*" within his division. An elector might want to know what that expression meant, and by the time the elector had heard the returning officer explain the meaning of that Latin phrase, it is possible that he would be frightened out of the polling booth. But under this Bill, it is intended that the elector shall not be permitted to go back to the returning officer, because there is a special clause to debar him from raising the same question again that day. I maintain that our chief object should be to make the electoral system as simple as possible. How can any good arise from duplicating the number of these questions? The Electoral Department, like all Government Departments, is always looking for more power. It is well known that people get excited on election day, and some electors are so nervous that almost any question by the returning officer would drive them out of the polling booth. First of all, the returning officer may ask three or four questions; then the scrutineers, probably, want the questions put in their way, and it is quite conceivable that a nervous elector would be prevented from exercising the vote. We would be well advised to adhere to the existing provision as to questions by returning officers. Will anybody contend that impersonation has increased of late years?

Senator PEARCE.—In the disputed Ballarat election it was contended that certain people had been improperly allowed to vote, and if these questions could have been asked on that occasion the trouble there would have been prevented.

Senator GARDINER.—I am glad the Minister has mentioned that election. The upsetting of it was due to the action



of the returning officer. Are we to give more power to these officers? Speaking broadly, I think the Commonwealth will generally secure the best men that it can get for the work. Why should we overload the electoral law with such provisions as that now proposed, unless to cure some apparent evil?

Senator PEARCE.—It may be for the protection of the elector.

Senator GARDINER.—This provision does not give him very much protection, because the Returning Officer has the right to disallow a vote. That right should not be given to any Returning Officer. An official may have the authority to say that if an elector claims the right to vote he must sign a declaration, and if his right is substantiated his vote should be allowed; but it is unjust and unreasonable to give a Returning Officer the right to disallow any elector's vote. There is another provision under which, if an elector states his objections in such a way that the Returning Officer is satisfied he has grounds for objecting, he can, by signing a declaration, vote; but I am referring to the elector who cannot answer numerous questions, and who is not to be allowed the privilege of leaving the booth to obtain the necessary information, and on returning to record his vote. I live in the Wentworth electorate, and on approaching the Returning Officer I may be asked in which division I live. My reply might be to the effect that I was not quite sure, as I was on the boundary of Lawson and Waverley. The Returning Officer, who may be a careful man, would probably say that that answer was insufficient, and would disallow my vote. After leaving the booth, however, I could satisfy myself on the point and return and inform the official that I was in the Waverley Division; but the law will not allow me to re-enter the booth and record my vote, as Parliament has decided that the matter cannot be opened up again on the same day.

Senator PEARCE.—The honorable senator has not read the clause carefully, because he will find that if the Returning Officer will not allow a vote an elector can insist upon his right.

Senator GARDINER.—I think I am making the position quite clear. Under sub-clause 3 an elector, if he knows his rights, can vote, but one of my chief

objections is based on the fact that an elector cannot vote unless he answers the questions. The sub-clause reads:—

The voter's answer to any question put to him by the Presiding Officer under the authority of this section shall be conclusive, and the matter shall not, subject to this section, be further inquired into during the polling.

Senator PEARCE.—Read sub-clause 4.

Senator GARDINER.—It is:—

Where a person's claim to vote has been rejected in pursuance of this section, and that person alleges that his claim to vote is wrongfully objected, and states the ground of his allegation, the Presiding Officer shall, notwithstanding anything contained in this section, permit him to vote if he makes a declaration in the prescribed form before the Presiding Officer as to the grounds of his allegation.

If it is intended that an elector can return and vote after he has obtained the information he requires to answer the questions correctly, what is the use of the provision which I have read? If we delete sub-clause 3 that would meet the case of an elector who had ascertained his rights and demanded a vote. My most serious objection, however, is in connexion with the questioning of voters in the booth.

Senator PEARCE.—An elector can insist upon his rights without leaving the booth, notwithstanding what the Returning Officer says in regard to his vote.

Senator GARDINER.—And the man who knows his right will insist upon exercising it. What is an elector to do who looks upon the Returning Officer as one possessing authority, and who should be obeyed, if he tells him that he has not the right to vote? If he went outside and consulted his party manager he would come back and demand the vote. I have known electors to be refused the right to vote, although their names were on the roll, and on one occasion I went into the booth with an elector, and coached him in demanding his right to vote. When I entered the booth the Returning Officer said, "What are you here for?" I replied, "To vote, and if my name is not on the roll I will get out." The elector I was assisting demanded his right to vote, although he had been turned out of the booth half-an-hour previously merely because they knew how he was likely to vote; but that incident occurred during a State election some time ago when politics were not so pure as they are to-day. If the officials are at all suspicious, and believe a person is acting dishonestly,

surely the electoral machinery is sufficient to protect the interests of candidates. Senator Duncan interjected that electors had been convicted of impersonation; but there are no provisions in the Act under which they could be convicted. Any person claiming the right to vote should be allowed to do so, and the Returning Officer should be given full power to punish any person who votes illegally. I do not care how stringent the provisions are made; but the rights of hundreds of thousands of voters should not be prejudiced merely to prevent one dishonest person from voting.

I understand that Senator Elliott will accept the suggestion of the Minister, because in its present form the amendment as to proportional representation might be regarded as a vote of censure on the Government, which, of course, would have my approval. I trust, however, that when the amendment is moved the Senate will deliberately consider the whole question of proportional representation, and although I could vote against it the occasion is one of those on which I would place public interest before personal advantage. Even Senator Wilson has convinced me of the advantages of a proportional system.

Senator BAKHAP.—Does the honorable senator believe in the representation of minorities?

Senator GARDINER.—Under the proportional system in New South Wales positions have arisen which prove conclusively how little we know concerning the system. In one instance a Returning Officer gave a decision after dividing the votes by a certain figure; but the Parliamentary Elections and Qualifications Committee displaced the candidate and put another man in his place. I have seen quite a number of communications to the press, some of which have stated that under the Tasmanian Act the matter would have been decided as it was by the Elections and Qualifications Committee, and others are decided by the Returning Officer. It can, therefore, be seen that there is still a difference of opinion as to the method to be adopted in arriving at a decision, and, apparently, we do not know enough concerning the system. Outside I have referred to the present Electoral Act as a fraud and a swindle.

The PRESIDENT (Senator the Hon. T. Givens).—The honorable senator must not refer in this Chamber to an

Act passed by this Parliament in that way.

Senator GARDINER.—I realize that, Mr. President, and I shall content myself by saying that I have referred to the Act in that way outside, although I am not doing so here. I have, however, referred in the Senate to that Statute in the strongest language I was capable of employing. Under the existing Act ex-Senator Grant and ex-Senator McDougall did not have all their votes counted in the last election, and surely that is unfair. Ex-Senator McDougall's figures were 87,000, and those of ex-Senator Grant, after ex-Senator McDougall had dropped out, were 104,000. There were three vacancies for the Senate, and with such a large number of votes surely all their votes, as well as my own, should have been counted. My votes were first counted against Senator Cox, who beat me, then against Senator Duncan, who also defeated me, and then against Senator Garling, whose name is so like my own, and whom I eventually defeated. I am supporting this Bill because it is an improvement on the existing measure; but it would be preferable if the votes recorded for the number one candidate on the first count were of equal value for the first three vacancies. Some time ago the Electoral Department submitted a proposal for the party system of voting which this Senate, in its wisdom, rejected, with the result that only one of the three Labour candidates for New South Wales was returned at the last election.

Senator DE LARGIE.—That happened elsewhere to every one.

Senator GARDINER.—Not at all; and the fault is in the present system. I would welcome an amendment to the existing Act which provides that, although there are three vacancies to fill, the electors have the voting power to fill only one. Perhaps under the preferential or proportional system the Minister will see that when there are three vacancies to fill the electors shall have the right to vote for the three candidates desired, and that the election of a candidate shall not depend upon the rejection of certain candidates before the next votes are counted.

Senator DE LARGIE.—Were the votes of which the honorable senator speaks second, third, fourth, or fifth preferences?

Senator GARDINER.—Second and third preferences. In New South Wales,



the Labour party arranged that in one division I should have all the first preference votes, in another that ex-Senator McDougall should have them all, and in another that ex-Senator Grant should receive them. In the first count, ex-Senator Grant received 84,000 votes, and ex-Senator McDougall 84,100, and I was leading the Labour men with 113,000; that was when I was supposed to be defeated.

Senator BAKHAP.—The honorable senator endeavoured to defeat the electoral law, but he did not succeed.

Senator GARDINER.—No. After ex-Senator McDougall had reached a certain stage, his votes were not counted; and when he dropped out ex-Senator Grant got ex-Senator McDougall's votes, but he did not go any further.

Senator SENIOR.—And the honorable senator got the advantage.

Senator PEARCE.—That is the preferential system.

Senator GARDINER.—That would be all right if there were single electorates; but this is an instance in which three candidates were required to fill three vacancies.

Senator SENIOR.—The Senate electorate is a single electorate so far as the counting is concerned.

Senator GARDINER.—So far as the counting is concerned it returns only one man. I need not argue the matter further, because every one must have a vivid recollection of the counting of the votes for the Senate at the last election in New South Wales. In my run off with Senator Cox, when we got to the end of the tether, he reached his quota with about 20,000 votes more than were counted for me. In the run off with Senator Duncan I came a little nearer the top, and then in the run off with Senator Garling my votes exceeded those which were counted for Senator Duncan. Although he was declared elected before I was, I secured more than 1,000 votes in excess of the number counted for him.

Senator LYNCH.—Senator Duncan's votes were not all counted.

Senator GARDINER.—I admit that. My own opinion is that, had I been out of the way, and ex-Senator McDougall's votes been counted, he might possibly have secured even a larger number of votes than were counted for me. Where there were three vacancies to be filled, I contend that every elector should have been

given the benefit of every one of the first three votes cast by him.

Senator PEARCE.—The honorable senator's argument appears to be that with a smaller number of votes there would have been two out of three candidates returned belonging to his party.

Senator GARDINER.—My argument is simply that where three vacancies have to be filled, the electors who are asked to fill those vacancies should each have three votes. As a matter of fact, what happened throughout Australia was that Labour had only one vote at the last election. That is to say, the whole strength of the Labour vote in every one of the States was counted for only one candidate. That might happen to the National party at the next election.

Senator PEARCE.—It might happen to any party in a big minority.

Senator GARDINER.—I claim that where three vacancies have to be filled, the first three votes should be counted. Failing that, I would prefer proportional representation, because it would, at any rate, give each candidate the number of votes to which he was proportionally entitled. Even though the Minister may be under the impression that the existing system of counting is right because under it he was returned, I hope he will look into the matter seriously, and will agree that, as an election for the Senate is held to fill three vacancies, each of the electors is entitled to three effective votes.

Senator ELLIOTT.—Adopting the suggestion of the Minister for Home and Territories, I ask leave to withdraw my amendment, with a view to submitting it in another form at a subsequent stage.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Senator DRAKE-BROCKMAN (Western Australia) [8.50].—I do not intend to speak at length, but some statements have been made during the debate which have led me to think it necessary to express my views. I wish, first of all, to refer to some remarks made by Senator MacDonald, remarks which he repeated in another discussion to-day. Prefacing his remarks by saying that he did not intend to reflect on certain Government officials, the honorable senator proceeded to reflect on them in very severe terms. He proceeded, also, to reflect on members of the Senate. He said that he realized that no matter what he said he could not affect the vote of any member of this Chamber.

Senator MacDONALD.—That is not a reflection; it is a fact.

Senator DRAKE-BROCKMAN.—The honorable senator knows that it is not so. I invite him to look at some of the divisions, and he will find Senator Gardiner and I are on the same list against proposals brought down by the Government. I wish to tell the honorable senator that he is introducing into the Senate an entirely new tone, which has not previously been noticeable during the time I have been a member of this Chamber.

Senator MacDONALD.—Is the honorable senator sure that he is correctly interpreting my remarks?

Senator DRAKE-BROCKMAN.—If Senator MacDonald will submit, not merely abuse, but arguments that will be convincing to intelligent people, he will secure their support, no matter on which side of the House honorable senators may sit. That is my experience in this Chamber. If he casts reflections on the intelligence of honorable senators, for my part I shall resent it, and I tell him so very plainly. If he can submit an argument capable of convincing me, I will support him; but if he abuses me because I happen to belong to the great National party, he will certainly get no assistance from me, and where he hits he will be hit back.

Senator MacDONALD.—The honorable senator appears to have been hit pretty badly.

Senator DRAKE-BROCKMAN.—Senator MacDonald devoted most of his remarks to clause 2, to which he somewhat strenuously objected. His main contention was that it was better that ten men not entitled to vote should record votes rather than that one man entitled to vote should be denied his right. That is an extraordinary doctrine, which might very well come from Queensland.

Senator GARDINER.—From which State the greatest men in the Commonwealth have come.

Senator DRAKE-BROCKMAN.—Some very great men in the Commonwealth have come from that State, but every man who comes to this Parliament from Queensland is not necessarily a great man, even if he abuses his opponents and does not endeavour to convince them. With the contention of Senator MacDonald I cannot agree. My view is that

it is better that one man should fail to have his vote recorded rather than that ten others not entitled to vote should record votes which may have the effect of defeating the intention of the majority of the people. Senator MacDonald claims to be an ultra-Democrat in favour of one man one vote, and one vote one value, and he ought to agree that Parliament should be a proper reflection of majority opinion.

Senator MacDONALD.—The honorable senator believes that ten should go guilty, rather than that one innocent person should be punished.

Senator DRAKE-BROCKMAN.—That is an extraordinary question. I do not believe that any one should be guilty, but if he is guilty he ought to be punished.

The next comment to which I wish to refer is that of Senator Bakhap. He stated, amongst other things, that he believed that honorable senators, either individually or in groups, had been influenced by outside political organizations. The political organizations of Tasmania may perhaps have approached the honorable senator on this subject, but no political organization has approached me, or has endeavoured to influence my vote at all. I do not know, in fact, what the point of view of the political organizations in Western Australia supporting the party to which I belong, is on this subject. I do know my own views on it, and I express them here regardless of what the views of outside organizations may be. I believe that those organizations are, in the main, composed of very intelligent people, and consequently their point of view will probably coincide with mine.

Senator Bakhap also suggested that by passing this Bill we shall be inferring that the electors are grossly ignorant of politics and candidates, and that when confronted with a ballot-paper they will not be able to understand it. I do not think that such an inference can fairly be drawn. Another honorable senator suggested at the same time that under this measure electors would be voting for a letter of the alphabet rather than for particular candidates. As I understand the Bill, the individual elector will retain every right that he has at present. He may, if he pleases, vote for one candidate of each party. The provision to which exception has been



taken is intended for the purpose of assisting the elector, and not hindering him in any way. He will still have all the freedom of choice that he enjoys under the existing system. To say that by passing this measure we shall be reflecting on the intelligence of electors is absurd. We are endeavouring to assist the electors. We know perfectly well that even men of the very highest intelligence—of the high order of intelligence that we find in this Chamber—when they come to exercise a vote sometimes make extraordinary mistakes. I have known important ballots taken amongst honorable senators in which informal votes were recorded. If that can happen amongst men of the intelligence of honorable senators, how much more likely is it to happen amongst the great majority of electors who have not the same opportunity of keeping themselves informed with regard to current politics that honorable members have. To say that the measure is a reflection on the intelligence of the elector is the quintessence of absurdity. It is an endeavour to help the elector, and if it will do so, it will be something gained. I am prepared to vote for it believing that it will be of very material assistance to the elector in coming to the conclusion he desires to come to, and in securing the result he desires from the casting of his vote.

Senator Keating's comment was on very similar lines to that of Senator Bakhap. He stated that no matter what we said the public would say that Parliament was endeavouring to assist the organizations outside. I want to make it clear that I am not endeavouring to assist any organization at all. I am endeavouring to assist the elector.

Senator DE LARGIE.—I do not think that any branch of the National Federation in Australia has expressed an opinion on the matter.

Senator DRAKE-BROCKMAN. — I have not heard of any. The organizations that support me have expressed no opinion on it. I believe that they have not been aware of the intention to introduce this Bill.

Senator BAKHAP.—The honorable senator should not forget that a similar proposal was submitted to the Senate before.

Senator DRAKE-BROCKMAN.—I believe that happened while I was still on active service, and I am, therefore, not familiar with what occurred on that occasion. The measure comes to me per-

fectly fresh. No influence has been brought to bear upon me by other members of this Parliament. I do not know the debate which took place on the matter before, nor do I know the opinions of the political organizations outside upon it. My own view, and I have been materially influenced in it by the ballots which have taken place in the Senate, is that honorable senators, as well as the ordinary average, intelligent elector in the community, need every assistance that Parliament can afford them in recording their votes.

I would draw the Minister's attention to the wording of clause 3. I know what he desires to achieve, but I am a little doubtful about the wording of the clause as it now stands. I suggest that he might refer it back to the officer who drafted it, with a suggestion that it might be reconsidered and made plainer. I think that probably what the Government wants is there, but I have a slight doubt about it.

I do not propose to deal with the other portions of the Bill here. They can be much more appropriately dealt with in Committee. I am inclined to think that there is a great deal of truth in the contention of Senator Gardiner that clause 14 will require some amendment in Committee.

Senator PEARCE (Western Australia —Minister for Home and Territories) [9.3].—One or two of Senator MacDonald's criticisms suggest the impetuosity of a beginner in politics. There was, for instance, the criticism in which he chided me for proceeding with the debate on the second reading of the Bill before the report of my speech had appeared in *Hansard*. Had his Leader been in the Chamber at the time, I am sure he would not have made that criticism. If the honorable senator had had more experience he would know that if a member desires to obtain a proof copy of another member's speech he usually asks for it, and if the member who made the speech has no objection, he arranges with *Hansard* for a proof to be supplied.

Senator MACDONALD.—I suggest that that should be done as a matter of routine.

Senator PEARCE.—There is an objection to that which Senator MacDonald will be the first to urge when he is a little older in political life. Before he allows his speech to get into the hands of his political opponents, he will like to be

certain that the report is correct. He will prefer, I feel sure, to correct the report of his speech himself before it is circulated to his opponents, although the *Hansard* reports are generally so accurate that they need no correction.

Regarding the nomadic elector, I can assure the honorable senator that this Bill will not prevent him voting. The Bill does not interfere with the sections of the Act, and has to be read in conjunction with it. The sections in the Act which enable the nomadic voter to vote are not touched. What the Bill proposes, and what it secures, I shall explain. We have compulsory enrolment, and it is the duty of the elector to see that his name is kept on the roll for the subdivision in which he is entitled to be enrolled. These clauses are for the purpose of securing that while he does this, he does not also keep his name on a roll on which he is not entitled to be enrolled.

Senator Garling seemed to have some doubt, although he was in favour of the grouping system, whether the clause would really give power to form a group in certain circumstances. He will find that owing to the way in which the clause is drafted, the grouping has to be done in a prescribed manner. A form which candidates will be able to obtain will be provided, and after agreement among themselves they will fill in that form, which will be obtainable long before the date of the election. Senator Garling questioned whether, if Brown, Smith and Jones agreed to form a group, Robinson could come along and demand to join the group. He thought that if Brown, Smith, and Jones did not agree to the inclusion of Robinson, the group could not be formed. That view is not correct. Brown, Smith, and Jones could be grouped, and Robinson's name would appear on the ballot-paper, but not as a member of the group. Senator Bakhap said that the provision for grouping is a reflection upon the intelligence of the electors. I wish to address a few remarks to those honorable senators who used that argument. What is the use of intelligence without the information necessary to enable it to form a judgment? This clause does not propose to provide the intelligence. It proposes to provide the information, and the intelligence of the electors, having the information, is then capable of expressing fully and without mistakes the judgment that it has formed.

*Senator Pearce.*

I am inclined to think that Senator Russell, in his remarks on the methods of counting, has been influenced unduly by his own experience in the last election. He is inclined to find fault with the system as it exists in the present Act, because of something which occurred to him, and which he seems rather to resent. The argument, as he stated it, does not seem to me to apply. If the group provision had been in the Act at the time of which Senator Russell speaks it would not have prevented him from being included in the group that his name appeared in. On the other hand, it would have facilitated his being there, because I understand that there was no objection on the part of the other two members with whom he was grouped to his inclusion with them. Therefore, his experience at the last election cannot be used as an argument against, at any rate, the group system, nor can his forecast of what may happen four years hence. He said he might not be prepared to sign a pledge to any party. It is not a condition of the formation of a group that a candidate must sign a pledge. There is no such obligation.

Senator WILSON.—There is an obligation to get into the group.

Senator PEARCE.—There may be an obligation of that character in a party, but not in the party to which Senator Russell is attached. There is no pledge in that party. Even if there were it would be a question between Senator Russell and his organization as to whether he should sign it. If his organization is willing to indorse his candidature, and to put him forward as one of a group, I cannot see how his forecast of the position at the next election, or his statement of the position at the last election, would prevent him from being a member of the group.

Senator Russell also mentioned the counting of the primary votes, and Senator Gardiner enlarged upon the same thing. I shall have something more to say about that matter when we get into Committee, where we shall be able to consider Senator Russell's contingent notice of motion and Senator Elliott's proposal in favour of proportional representation. In regard to the arguments put forward by Senator Russell and Senator Gardiner, I take it that we do not want to try to invent a counting system that will enable us to take more out of a quart pot than we put into it. What



we desire is a system that will record truthfully and accurately the view of the majority of the electors in a State. That is what the Act and this Bill purport to do. I think that an examination of the votes cast at the last election made it clear that the Act accomplished that. As a matter of fact, the voting not merely for the Senate, but also for the House of Representatives, when added together for each State, showed that the Official Labour party was in a minority in every State. Therefore, if the preferential system is destined to give the seats to the majority party, then, judging by the votes cast for the House of Representatives, the results justified the system. I therefore say that before we alter the system of the counting of votes we ought to be quite sure that we are not merely tampering with it, and not endeavouring to get a piebald system of proportional representation out of it. If the Senate is in favour of proportional representation, there is a proper and accepted method of getting it. The Senate may decide to adopt a well-tested system by which we can have proportional representation, but it cannot get proportional representation under a preferential vote by altering the system of the counting of the primary votes. It seems to be in Senator Gardiner's mind that by an alteration of the method of counting, results similar to those obtainable from proportional representation can be achieved. Senator Gardiner is clearly lamenting the fact that in New South Wales at the last election only one representative of the Official Labour party was returned. He seems to be asking that they should return more. There were not sufficient votes cast in New South Wales to justify more than one, unless there is to be some other system. I ask honorable senators, before they alter the present system of counting, to thoroughly satisfy themselves that the new method they propose to adopt will be consistent with the principle of preferential voting, and that they will not be bringing in a freak system that will have freak results.

Senator FAIRBAIRN.—Proportional voting would keep the Nationalist party in power for some time.

Senator PEARCE.—I think that result is pretty sure to be obtained under any system. When there are three vacancies to be filled for the Senate, and there is only one ballot-paper, there are really

three elections in the count, and the same principle ought to apply in each of these counts. There can be only one man and one vote in each count. If we were to give the first three votes equal value, there would be three primary votes in a single electorate. There would be three separate elections on the one ballot-paper.

Senator CRAWFORD.—When there are three candidates to be elected, No. 4 is the first preferential vote.

Senator PEARCE.—Yes. It would complicate the system. I hope the Senate will not accept the suggested alteration without making sure that it would be a step in the right direction.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill read a second time.

Senator GARDINER.—May I ask if Senator Elliott will have an opportunity to submit his proposal in favour of proportional representation?

The PRESIDENT (Senator the Hon. T. Givens).—Senator Elliott's right to submit his proposal is fully conserved, because the section which he proposes to amend in the principal Act is exactly the provision that Senator Russell wishes, in accordance with his contingent notice of motion, to have opened for consideration.

Motion (by Senator RUSSELL) agreed to—

That it be an instruction to the Committee of the Whole on the Commonwealth Electoral Bill to consider an amendment of section 135 of the principal Act.

*In Committee:*

Clause 1 agreed to.

Progress reported.

Senate adjourned at 9.21 p.m.

## House of Representatives.

*Wednesday, 2 August, 1922.*

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. Sir Elliot Johnson) took the chair at 3 p.m., and read prayers.

### WAR SERVICE HOMES IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

Mr. BLUNDELL.—I desire to ask the Minister representing the Minister for Repatriation whether any arrangement has yet been made between the Commonwealth and the Government of South Australia for the resumption of the building of War Service Homes in that State?

Mr. HECTOR LAMOND.—There has been no further development.

*Later—*

Mr. BLUNDELL.—In reply to a question which I addressed to the honorable gentleman last week, he stated that there was no agreement between the Commonwealth and the Government of South Australia as to the building of War Service Homes in that State. I direct his attention to the fact that on the day that he made that statement the Minister for Repatriation laid on the table of the Senate two agreements. Will he now lay those agreements on the table of this House?

Mr. HECTOR LAMOND.—The agreements to which the honorable member alludes have already been laid on the table of this House, and have no relation to the Government of South Australia.

## FLOUR-MILLING TRADE, SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

### PRICE OF WHEAT.

Mr. MAKIN.—In view of the serious position of the flour-milling trade in South Australia, as a result of the preferential price charged for the wheat sold by the Wheat Pool to Western Australia and Victoria, will the Prime Minister, having regard to the fact that these Pools are guaranteed by the Government, endeavour immediately to secure the charge of a uniform price throughout the Commonwealth for wheat supplied to millers in the various States?

Mr. HUGHES.—I received a deputation of representatives of wheat-growers on Friday last, and the position of the millers was then mentioned. The matter to which the honorable member refers will be one of those discussed with the representative of the Commonwealth, the Commonwealth Bank. So far as I know, the wheat-growers are prepared to give such reasonable assurances as may be necessary in this matter.

## LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

### AUSTRALIAN DELEGATION: REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN.

Mr. PROWSE.—Is the Prime Minister yet in a position to give an answer to the request of the deputation of the National Council of Women, Perth, who asked that the Government include in the

Australian delegation to the League of Nations, at least, one woman delegate?

Mr. HUGHES.—We have communicated with the High Commissioner in regard to this matter, and have also considered it here. Difficulty arises, quite apart from the question of the representation of the women of Australia, owing to the number of organizations of women, each of which might fairly claim that its representatives should have preference. There is considerable difficulty, and I am in communication with the High Commissioner on the subject.

## IMPORTATION OF SHIPS FOR LIGHTHOUSE SERVICES.

Mr. MATHEWS.—When in Adelaide last week, I heard that the Department of Trade and Customs was short of light-ships, and that it was intended to import some vessels for the purpose. I desire to ask the Minister if the report is correct, and whether it would not be better, in his opinion, to build such vessels at Williamstown?

Mr. RODGERS.—There is absolutely no truth in the report that it is intended to import such vessels. As a matter of fact I have had, only to-day, a conference with the Director of Lighthouses and Mr. Farquhar, the Government Director of Shipbuilding, and have also been looking into the financial aspect of the question. If funds can be provided, proposals will be submitted for the provision of additional ships for lighthouse services, such vessels to be built in Australia.

## PRESENTATION OF ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Mr. HUGHES (Bendigo)—Prime Minister and Minister for External Affairs [3.5].—In reference to a statement by my colleague the Minister for Defence (Mr. Greene) in regard to the presentation to His Excellency the Governor-General of the Address-in-Reply agreed to by this House, I have to announce that His Excellency is on an official visit to Queensland, and that it will meet his convenience to receive the Address-in-Reply on his return to Melbourne next month.

## UNEMPLOYMENT.

### PROPOSED GRANT FOR PUBLIC WORKS.

Mr. FOWLER.—In connexion with the proposed Commonwealth grant of £250,000 to the various States, for road



making purposes, in order to assist unemployed returned soldiers, I desire to ask the Treasurer whether the grant will be made on a *per capita* basis of population or on a *per capita* basis of returned soldiers? It will mean a considerable difference to some of the States.

Mr. BRUCE.—I think this question, since it involves a matter of policy, should have been addressed to the Prime Minister. The position is, however, that the proposed grant is to provide, not for unemployed returned soldiers alone, but for unemployed generally. The distribution will be on the basis of the whole population of each State.

Mr. HIGGS.—Will the Prime Minister lay upon the table of the House a statement showing the allocations to the different States of the amount of £250,000 to be advanced by the Federal Government for road-making purposes?

Mr. HUGHES.—I shall do so.

#### SHIPBUILDING TRIBUNAL.

Mr. MAHONY.—Is the Prime Minister yet in a position to state why the award of the Shipbuilding Tribunal has not been applied to the mechanics and their assistants at Cockatoo Island Dockyard?

Mr. HUGHES.—I am afraid that I have to plead guilty to not being possessed of the information desired by the honorable member. I regret that I cannot supply it, but I shall endeavour to inform the House as soon as possible.

#### FRENCH DECORATIONS FOR AUSTRALIAN SOLDIERS.

Mr. MARR.—I desire to ask the Minister for Defence whether he has seen in the press a report to the effect that the French people were conferring decorations upon some of the British Units who participated in actions in France during the great war, and were desirous of conferring the *Croix de Guerre* on two Australian Units—the 13th and 15th Brigades—but that the authorities in Australia had prevented them from doing so? Can the honorable gentleman state why Australian Units have been precluded from having these honours conferred on them?

Mr. GREENE.—I do not think it is correct that the authorities in Australia

have prevented the conferring of these decorations on Australian Units, but I shall have inquiries made, and let the honorable member know.

#### RECIPROCAL TRADE AGREEMENT WITH NEW ZEALAND.

Mr. WATT.—Will the Minister for Trade and Customs lay on the table of the House all correspondence between the Governments of the Dominion of New Zealand and the Commonwealth in relation to the reciprocal trade agreement?

Mr. RODGERS.—I do not think there is any objection to that course.

Mr. FENTON.—Has the Minister for Trade and Customs yet received any protests against the ratification of the reciprocal trade agreement between the Commonwealth and New Zealand? If so, will he lay upon the table such protests, together with any that may yet be received, so that the House may discuss the proposed agreement in the light of those objections?

Mr. RODGERS.—So far, I have received no such protests. I have received some communications on the subject, and—this applies also to the question asked by the honorable member for Balaclava—I will examine carefully all correspondence on the subject; but I do not propose to place on the table any papers which, in my judgment, will jeopardize the agreement.

#### REPATRIATION LOANS TO STATES.

Mr. MAKIN.—Will the Treasurer inform the House whether it is a fact that, upon the money advanced by the Commonwealth to the State of South Australia for the repatriation of returned soldiers, the Commonwealth is charging interest at the rate of  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.?

Mr. BRUCE.—That percentage is not quite correct; but, when the conversion costs are taken into consideration, the money advanced to the States out of the Diggers' Loan has cost nearly the price which the honorable member mentioned.

#### DEFENCE DEPARTMENT RETIREMENTS.

Mr. WATKINS.—Will the Minister for Defence state the reason for discharging, or causing to be retired, members of

the Royal Australian Garrison Artillery before the completion of their twenty years' term of service without making any proportionate payment in lieu of long-service leave?

Mr. GREENE.—If the honorable member is referring to non-commissioned officers and men who are not being allowed to re-engage on the expiration of their term of service, a Bill to be submitted to Parliament shortly will make provision for such men to be included in the scheme of compensation.

#### NORTH-SOUTH RAILWAY.

Mr. LIVINGSTON.—When does the Minister for Works and Railways expect to receive the report of the Public Works Committee upon the proposed North-South railway?

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—I do not know when it will be submitted.

#### NORTHERN TERRITORY.

##### MEDICAL OFFICER.

Sir GRANVILLE RYRIE.—On 27th July, the honorable member for Hunter (Mr. Charlton) asked some questions about the Government medical officer at Darwin (Dr. Leighton Jones). A reply has now been received stating that the dentistry work performed by Dr. Jones is negligible, and is limited to occasional amalgam fillings and extractions. The optical work consists of testing and procuring glasses from the south. In both matters Dr. Jones is merely following the custom instituted by previous medical officers. It is stated that his fees are similar to those in rural districts in New South Wales, and are as stipulated in an agreement made by him with Dr. Gilruth, a former Administrator.

#### UNEMPLOYED IN NEWCASTLE.

##### ISSUE OF MILITARY BLANKETS.

Mr. GREENE.—On the 27th July, the honorable member for Newcastle (Mr. Watkins) referred to the question of the issue of military blankets to some hundreds of unemployed in the Newcastle district who are in necessitous circumstances. I am now in a position to in-

form the honorable member that, some little time ago, on the representations of the Minister for Labour, New South Wales, I approved of the issue of several hundred blankets for the use of distressed returned soldiers in that State. This issue was made subject to the condition that the Returned Sailors and Soldiers Imperial League of Australia became responsible for the blankets. An application was subsequently received from the Warriors' Friend Campaign, Sydney, for the issue of 100 blankets for use at Newcastle, but in view of the issue which had already been approved under the auspices of the Returned Sailors and Soldiers Imperial League of Australia, Sydney, the Base Commandant in Sydney was instructed to inform the Warriors' Friend Campaign Committee of what had been done in the matter of making blankets available through the Returned Sailors and Soldiers Imperial League of Australia. If an application is made for the loan of blankets for distressed soldiers at Newcastle, and the Returned Sailors and Soldiers Imperial League of Australia will agree to the same arrangement as was made in connexion with previous issues, I shall see whether it is possible for the Department to make some blankets available.

#### MANUFACTURE OF SUPERPHOSPHATES.

##### TREATMENT OF SULPHUR ORES.

Mr. CHARLTON asked the Minister for Trade and Customs, *upon notice*—

In connexion with the remarks of the then Minister for Trade and Customs, on 9th November last (*Hansard*, pages 12538-9) that a definite basis of agreement for the erection of furnaces and the treatment of sulphur ores between the Electrolytic Zinc Company and the Yarraville manufacturers of superphosphates had been arrived at, and that his authority for stating this was the assurance of certain named directors of the various companies whose word he accepted, respecting which he assured the House, amongst other things, that the agreement was to provide safeguards for users against war-time prices, will the Minister state—

- (1) Is it correct that no such agreement has been entered into, and that the matter has been abandoned as between the Yarraville manufacturers and the Electrolytic Zinc Company?



- (2) If so, what steps did the previous Minister take to insure the observance of the undertaking given to him, and through him to the House, or what steps did the present Minister take?

Mr. RODGERS.—The answers to the honorable member's questions are as follow:—

1. The Electrolytic Zinc Company is, and always has been, quite open and willing to comply with the terms of the letter written to the Minister of Customs and quoted by him on 9th November last (*Hansard*, page 12536).

2. The previous Minister was not given an opportunity to take any action owing to his transfer to another Department shortly after the agreement was made.

The present Minister, in April last, called a conference of all interested parties to discuss whether the agreement made in Parliament was being faithfully carried out.

As a result of such conference it was decided to appoint a committee representing all interested to report to the Minister.

The representatives elected by each interest were:—Mr. T. J. McGalliard, President of the Chamber of Agriculture, and Mr. W. G. Gibson, M.H.R., representing the agricultural interests; Messrs. W. F. Cuming and Burns Cuming, representing superphosphate manufacturers; Messrs. Colin Fraser and Thos. Haynes, representing sulphur producers; and Mr. Ambrose Pratt, secretary. The function of the Committee, as expressed in a letter to the secretary, was "to inquire into the disputes that have arisen between certain parties as to the interpretation and carrying out of the undertaking given through the Minister of Trade and Customs to the House at the time the Tariff was passed, and also by reason of later developments in connexion with supplies of pyritic ores by the Mount Lyell Company, with a view to arriving at a satisfactory arrangement for the use of pyrites and other sulphide ores in the production of sulphuric acid for the manufacture of superphosphates.

The following report from the Committee was received:—

415 Collins-street, Melbourne,  
25th May, 1922.

The Hon. Arthur S. Rodgers,  
Minister for Trade and Customs,  
Department of Trade and Customs, Melbourne,  
Sir,

#### *Re Sulphur Duty.*

I beg to advise you that meetings of the Committee appointed by the conference on the 21st April last, were held at 415 Collins-street, on the 23rd, 24th, and 25th May.

Present:—Mr. T. J. McGalliard (in chair), and Mr. W. G. Gibson, M.H.R., representing the agricultural interests; Messrs. W. F. Cuming and Burns Cuming, representing superphosphate manufacturers; Messrs. Colin Fraser and Thos. Haynes, representing sulphur producers; and Mr. Ambrose Pratt, secretary.

The attached letter *re* functions of Committee was read by the secretary. It was decided:—

- (a) No dispute exists between sulphur-producing interests and manufacturers of superphosphates. It was ascertained that, on the contrary, negotiations are now in progress between the sulphur-producing interests and the superphosphate manufacturers with the object of utilizing zinc concentrates and/or pyrites to replace imported sulphur for the production of the sulphuric acid used in manufacturing superphosphate.
- (b) Satisfactory arrangements are being made to remove the misunderstanding between the sulphur producers and a superphosphate company which proposes to establish works in Melbourne.

It was decided to inquire what the increased cost of superphosphate would be to the farmer as a result of the duty of £2 10s. per ton on sulphur.

It was agreed that, on the basis of utilizing imported sulphur, this would be equal to 5s. per ton. Providing, however, that the arrangements (now in progress) for the supply of locally-produced sulphur are completed satisfactorily, the increased cost, while remaining at 5s. per ton in Western Australia, would be only from 2s. to 3s. a ton in the other States.

It was further agreed that a substantial reduction in the price of superphosphate would take place, owing to the lower cost of phosphate rock, wages, &c.

Consideration was given to the insurance benefits Australia would receive by the establishment of sulphur production in the Commonwealth in time of war, and representatives of the mining companies gave an assurance that no advantage would be taken of war conditions should they arise.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Yours faithfully,

(Sgd.) T. J. MCGALLIARD,  
Chairman.

Notwithstanding the fact that all members of the Committee were unanimous in approving the presentation of the foregoing report, two members of the Committee, Messrs. McGalliard and Gibson, presented a minority report to the Minister, in which the opinion was expressed that the whole community, and not the farmer, should bear the cost of establishing the industry of sulphur production. In this minority report, no reference whatever was made to the question of the agreement now under consideration.

#### PAPERS.

The following papers were presented:—

International Labour Organization of the League of Nations—Third Conference held at Geneva, 25th October to 19th November, 1921—Reports by Australian Delegates.

Public Works Committee Act—Seventh General Report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works.

Ordered to be printed.

Customs Act—Proclamation (dated 5th July, 1922) prohibiting the exportation of certain canned fruits (Peaches, Apricots, Pears, Plums, Cherries, and Pineapples) unless the fruit has first been prepared and graded in accordance with the Customs Regulations.

Northern Territory Acceptance Act and Northern Territory (Administration) Act Ordinance of 1922 — No. 9 — Stock Diseases.

## DEATH OF THE HON. F. G. TUDOR.

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. Sir Elliot Johnson).—I have received the following letter from Mrs. Tudor:—

263 Stawell-street, Burnley,  
28th July, 1922.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER,

I desire to acknowledge the receipt of your letter conveying copy of resolutions passed in the House appreciative of my late husband's public services, together with a kind expression of sympathy to us all. I thank you for the bound and other copies of the resolutions and speeches which have just come to hand. They will be treasured by me, as they, in no small degree, comfort me in my great loss.

Yours very sincerely,  
FANNY J. TUDOR.

## WASHINGTON CONFERENCE: TREATIES.

Debate resumed from 26th July (*vide* page 793), on motion by Mr. HUGHES—

That this House approves the Treaty between the United States of America, the British Empire, France, and Japan, relating to their insular Possessions and insular Dominions in the Pacific Ocean, signed at Washington, on 13th December, 1921, the declaration signed on that date accompanying that Treaty, and the Treaty between those Powers supplementary to that Treaty, signed at Washington on the 6th February, 1922.

Mr. CHARLTON (Hunter) [3.20].—The proposals which have emanated from the Washington Conference will, I feel sure, meet with the approval of honorable members, because, first of all, they provide for such a limitation of naval armaments as will considerably lessen the load of taxation carried by the Commonwealth, and also by other nations. However, before dealing with the results which have accrued from that Conference, I wish to make a few preliminary remarks

concerning the events which led to the holding of the Conference. It will be remembered that it was claimed here and in other parts of the world that, in consequence of Great Britain and Japan having notified that they had become signatories to the League of Nations, the Anglo-Japanese Treaty no longer existed; and consequently there was a disposition on the part of public men in Australia, in America, and elsewhere, to create an atmosphere which, had it been permitted to continue, must have led to further wars. It was constantly contended that since the Anglo-Japanese Treaty no longer existed—

Mr. HUGHES.—Japan always contended that the Treaty did exist.

Mr. CHARLTON.—I am aware of that, and I shall put that view a little later. It was contended by those to whom I have just referred that, as the Treaty no longer existed, Japan, in view of her population of about 50,000,000 people and her limited area, would be compelled to look elsewhere to settle her people, and that as her natural line of expansion would be in the Pacific, where Australia had possessions and had been given a mandate by the League of Nations, there was a danger that the Commonwealth might be involved in further complications. This atmosphere, which, as I have said, was created by certain statements of public men, had a tendency to cause the nations bordering on the Pacific to prepare for further hostilities. The Commonwealth was preparing to spend more money on defence than it could possibly afford, in view of the great load of taxation it was obliged to carry in consequence of the recent war.

Mr. HUGHES.—Of course, the honorable member is aware that before the Imperial Conference disbanded that point was set at rest, and it was agreed by both parties, Great Britain and Japan, that the Treaty had not been terminated.

Mr. CHARLTON.—The right honorable gentleman is merely forestalling what I was about to say. I am giving a brief history of the position which existed prior to the holding of the Washington Conference. The outcome of the happenings I have described was the holding of an Imperial Conference. Prior to the departure of our Prime Minister to represent Australia at that Conference, he gave us



to understand that in view of the Anglo-Japanese Treaty having lapsed he would use his utmost endeavours to have a Treaty drawn up between Great Britain, America, Japan, and the Dominions. The Imperial Conference was held, and it was found that Japan maintained that the Anglo-Japanese Treaty had not ceased to exist. She contended that the step taken by Great Britain and herself in becoming signatories to the League of Nations had in no sense infringed Article 6 of the Treaty. The Lord Chancellor, Lord Birkenhead, to whom the matter was referred, gave it as his opinion that the Anglo-Japanese Treaty was still in existence, thus removing any danger that might have existed in regard to the Pacific problem, and showing that we were not justified in spending additional money on defence on the ground that Japan might be an aggressor in these waters. Honorable members thereupon endeavoured in this Chamber to have the expenditure upon defence cut down by a considerable amount. We said that we did not consider there was any danger in doing so, that if public men propounded the theory of the likelihood of danger, it must lead to future war, and that, in view of the devastation caused by the previous world-wide war, all should be using their greatest efforts to maintain peace. It was pleasing to us to realize that the spirit which had been engendered in Australia had no justification, and that the Anglo-Japanese Treaty was still in existence. However, at the Imperial Conference, the proposal for which our Prime Minister was sponsor was put forward, that prior to the Conference which the President of the United States of America had called, there should be another Conference between representatives of the Powers concerned for the purpose of drawing up a further Treaty, which would embrace America, as well as Great Britain and Japan. The President of the United States of America did not accede to this proposal. From that time on until the matter was debated in this House, and prominence was given to the question of representation at the Washington Conference by action taken by honorable members of the Opposition in conjunction with other honorable members, together with assistance from the public press, there was very little disposition on the part of the Commonwealth to

bother about the proposed Conference, since the Government did not think it would count for much, and were prepared to continue to live in an atmosphere of war. However, very soon after the debate in this House, we were pleased to hear that the door stood wide open for the representation of Australia at the Washington Conference.

The Prime Minister has said that the outcome of the Conference exceeded the most sanguine expectations of those who were in favour of it. I think that the Conference could have gone much further. It has certainly rendered good service to the world, and achieved something which will be of considerable assistance, not only to Australia, but also to the other nations. I refer to the limitation of naval armaments. This was agreed to under what is known as the Quadruple Treaty, which sets out exactly the number of capital ships each nation is permitted to have. Great Britain is to have fifteen capital ships, with a limitation of 525,000 tons; America fifteen capital ships, with a limitation of 525,000 tons; Japan, nine capital ships, with a limitation of 315,000 tons; Italy, five capital ships, with a limitation of 175,000 tons; and France, five capital ships, with a limitation of 175,000 tons. This has enabled us to reduce our defence expenditure to a very large extent. Not only have our costs been reduced in consequence of the general reduction of armaments, but we have also the advantage of feeling that during the next ten years at least we shall be safe from aggression on the part of any Pacific power. There is, therefore, no need for us to spend vast sums upon military services.

I am very pleased that the Washington Conference was held, if only for the reason that it has put an end to mad competition in preparation for further wars. But there were certain problems dealt with which cannot be said to have been successfully solved. I appreciate the difficulties which beset the representatives of the nations at such a gathering, and can understand the disappointment of the many over the stubbornness of a few upon a subject of world-wide interest. I have in mind the proposal for the abolition of submarines. During the war the world was aghast at the dreadful deeds of submarines. Germany was solely responsible. Innocent women and children

were sent to their doom without warning. War is always barbarous, but Germany's submarine warfare was the most dreadful of all. Though the British delegates urged the abolition of submarines, the Conference was unable to reach unanimity. But, while the use of submarines is still permitted, conditions have been laid down which should prevent a repetition of the past barbarities of sea warfare. Submarine horrors involving non-combatants and innocent women and children will never again be inflicted if future belligerent powers will agree to observe the conditions drawn up at Washington. I have my doubts upon that matter, but, at any rate, it has been laid down that before a ship is torpedoed she must be called upon to stop, and examined for contraband and war-like material generally, and all on board must be removed to safety before the vessel is fired upon and sunk. All the people of the world are now against war.

Mr. MAXWELL.—And yet they fight.

Mr. CHARLTON.—They will continue to fight unless their representative men want peace, and determine to keep it. It is not the mass of the people who precipitate and make war; almost always a few individuals are responsible. I was surprised, as well as disappointed, that the Washington Conference should not have agreed upon the abolition of the submarine. It appears that provision is actually being made now by certain nations to extend the use of these underwater craft. It is a matter for some satisfaction that the British delegates stood out strongly for abolition.

Mr. HUGHES.—And the American representatives also.

Mr. MAXWELL.—It was chiefly the French who opposed the proposal.

Mr. CHARLTON.—I am disappointed also with respect to the limitation of the use of aircraft. Air ships and aeroplanes played a very prominent part in the Great War; and, like the submarines, they were introduced for the first time as fighting units. We remember with what horror we read of the German airship and aeroplane raids on Great Britain, and learned how the lives of many defenceless people were destroyed by bombs from the air. It is almost unbelievable that the Conference should have disagreed upon the matter of the abolition of aircraft in warfare. The delegates could not come to any satisfactory conclusion. The ex-

cuse offered was that it was not practicable to impose limitations upon military aviation, for the reason that such imposition might interfere with civil aerial progress. The subject-matter, generally, was referred to a further Conference. I cannot appreciate the reasons advanced by the Conference in this respect, nor accept them as adequate. What has the making of war to do with the advancement of civil aviation? The great purpose of aircraft in war is the destruction of life and property. On the civil side, however, aviation is a tremendous factor for national development. I do not know exactly why the Conference should have failed to agree, but there is something very significant in the following cablegram published in to-day's press:—

Fokker, the Dutch designer of the German warplane, has arrived from America, where he is organizing a great commercial aviation system. In an interview he declared that air attacks in future wars would be on a stupendous scale of destructiveness, and he did not think it possible for any defence to keep every air fleet away. The best defence would be the strongest air fleet capable of destroying enemy bombers' bases. He believed that aviation would ultimately replace artillery, and pointed out that the poison gas-carrying aeroplanes which were likely to be used to attack large cities, would develop awful powers.

This great designer of the German fighting machines has been engaged in America, it appears, in organizing commercial aviation; but the disquieting feature is that he speaks of the linking up of such interests with aviation in time of war. I do not know whether we are not spending money unnecessarily upon our aerial services. The Treasurer (Mr. Bruce), in the course of his financial statement a month ago, pointed out that the air services had spent more than £52,000 over the estimated expenditure for the financial year. I have reason to believe that the whole of the over-expenditure was upon the military side of aviation, and that, on the civil side, there has not been spent even the whole of the sum voted by Parliament. If that is so, it shows that we are expending large sums of money on aviation for defence purposes. I take no exception to improving aviation for the assistance of settlers and the development of the country—for other than defence purposes. We cannot afford to go on spending large sums in the latter direction, and, therefore, I hope that this matter will be carefully considered by the responsible Minister.



No one can take much exception to the destruction of the war-ships. It is said that the rights of property should be preserved; but, in this instance, we lose nothing by the destruction of property, for it is of no use to the community.

Mr. BRENNAN.—It cost the country a lot of money.

Mr. CHARLTON.—Quite so; but it is of no use to keep up property of a kind that will only result in costing us a great deal more money. If these ships could be used for any other purpose, well and good; but I have nothing to say against the decision of the Conference to sink or destroy.

Another matter that came up was the use of poisonous gases in warfare; and it is a good thing to know that the Conference agreed that it should be prohibited in the future. There was nothing more diabolical in the war than the use of these poisonous gases, and at the present time there are thousands of men, not only in this country, but throughout the world, who from its effects are practically ruined for life. We meet men constantly who are suffering from the results of the use of those gases, and it is sad to think that they can never be efficient men to follow their usual employment. We have, therefore, much to be thankful for in the decision of the Conference to abolish the use of poisonous gases.

As to land armaments, the Conference accomplished, we might say, nothing, and so far as this question affects Australia, I do not intend to take up any time in discussing the facts. There is an effort being made to see that China has equitable treatment in her trade relations, and in that direction, I think, the Conference has accomplished much. I am prepared to admit, with the Prime Minister, that the Conference has achieved good work, and will be the means, at least, of bringing about a more serene atmosphere during the next ten years in the Pacific. At the expiration of that ten years, any nation may give notice—

Mr. MAXWELL.—The nations will, perhaps, have more sense by that time.

Mr. CHARLTON.—No penalty is incurred by a nation if it does break away from the agreement arrived at—we have to rely on the nations keeping faith. As the Prime Minister has said, the observance of these Treaties is a matter of

moral force; but although the arrangement, as far as it goes, meets with my approval, I do not wish the matter to rest there. I have urged from time to time since the war, and shall continue to do so, that we ought to do everything we possibly can to maintain peace. I am told, of course, that we cannot change the human race; but if we never make an effort we shall never accomplish anything. What we ought to do is to galvanize the League of Nations into life—every effort should be made to breathe the breath of life into that skeleton.

Mr. FOWLER.—It is not a skeleton.

Mr. CHARLTON.—But it can be improved. Many people say that we cannot end war, that wars are capitalistic enterprises, and so forth, and our only method of procedure is on the lines of the League of Nations Covenant. I have not seen the report which the Prime Minister laid on the table to-day; but my own opinion is that if the working men threshed these questions out, so as to be better able to understand them, we should accomplish something.

Mr. FOWLER.—I wish to see the women take the question up.

Mr. CHARLTON.—Quite so; I mean women as well as men, and public men, particularly, ought to direct their attention to the question. Unfortunately, the League is not getting that attention from some of our public men that it should. The influence of every public man should be directed to galvanizing the League of Nations into life. The Prime Minister told us that the Washington Conference had accomplished more than the League of Nations. But that is not to say that the League of Nations cannot accomplish more than the Washington Conference. Unless we use every ounce of influence we have in the direction of disarmament, we cannot hope to achieve much; and even if we cannot bring about total disarmament, we may be able to greatly limit the cost of defence. These are the directions in which, I think, we ought to move. It was the ex-President of the United States of America who proposed the formation of the League of Nations, and, unfortunately, the present President is not following in his footsteps. If, however, the American President and the people of that country could

see their way to link up with the other powerful nations in the League, we might see some great results. We cannot refuse Germany or any other country permission to come into the League if that League is to be a success. If we are bent on peace, we must have sufficient sincerity to permit every nation to come in and be represented; and unless, through the League of Nations, we can arrange for the punishment of any nation which breaks faith, we shall fail to prevent war. A union of the four nations of America, Great Britain, Japan, and France will not, of itself, prevent future wars; all nations must be linked up. Any one of these four nations might have a quarrel with any one of the nations outside that League, with war as the result. There must be a thorough understanding amongst all peoples throughout the world. If there is a breach of the League of Nations agreement the offending nation must be penalized by the other nations.

Mr. FOWLER.—That is the stumbling block.

Mr. CHARLTON. — Exactly. No nation would set the League at defiance when it knew that all the other nations were prepared to penalize it. Our chief hope, as I have said before, lies in the galvanizing of the League of Nations into life. Some good has already been done, and it has relieved us considerably; and we can be further relieved if we use all our influence in the direction of making the League of Nations what it ought to be—a real entity. I think we have spent up to now something like £80,000 in this direction; but it will be money well spent if every nation will show a real desire to bring about not only the limitation of armaments, but disarmament. As to the proposals made, I have nothing but words of eulogy for them.

Dr. EARLE PAGE (Cowper) [3.59].—This series of resolutions moved by the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) in connexion with the Treaties agreed to at Washington are matters of very much more significance than they appear. The motions which place these Treaties before us for ratification indicate to me the permanency of the change in the internal relations in the British Commonwealth of Nations. That change has come for

good or ill, and it seems to me that possibly it may be for ill. If it is necessary to have ratification of all Treaties in every independent Dominion, we may create a force which may ultimately lead to disruption within the Empire. There are some who think that this sense of responsibility is merely a new toy; but we are now making ourselves responsible for Treaties, and that fact of itself shows our willingness to bear our share of the burden of defence, and that we must cease henceforth to “sponge,” as it seems to me we are now doing to a large degree, on the Mother Country, for the defence of the continent. We henceforth take our full share in the defence of the Empire. At the Imperial Conference the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) said that he believed that the British Navy was essentially the first line of defence, and that our contribution to that first line of defence must take the form of a Dominion Navy. Last year we budgeted to spend £2,340,000 on naval defence, whereas Great Britain budgeted for £82,000,000 in respect of her full share. When I hear others boast about our taxation being less per head than that of the Old Country I feel rather ashamed of the fact that while we pay only £13 per head by way of taxation, as against £24 per head paid in Great Britain, we leave the people there to carry a burden something like forty times as great as our own in respect of this matter of naval defence.

Mr. RILEY.—Does the honorable member think that our taxation should be increased to meet naval requirements?

Dr. EARLE PAGE.—Our contribution to the naval defence of the Empire should be commensurate with our weight and influence as one of the Dominions of the Empire.

If we are to continue to take part in the foreign affairs of the Empire, we need some machinery very much better than we have to inform ourselves of what is actually taking place. The best course to follow, it seems to me, would be to secure the establishment of a Committee of this Parliament—a Committee of External or Imperial Relations—consisting of members of all parties, which would be enabled to keep itself fully informed of what is happening in the Old Country, as well as in the other Dominions. It



would thus be in a position to make public pronouncements, and so keep public opinion in the Commonwealth practically the same as it is in all the other Dominions. Last year I made a suggestion with regard to our external representation. There certainly must be some better method than we have at present of keeping ourselves fully informed of what is going on.

This motion deals with the Quadruple Treaty, which is the first practical result of the Washington Conference, and may be taken to be practically the sum of its achievements. Without this Quadruple Treaty there could have been no Five Power Treaty in regard to the limitation of armaments, nor would it have been likely that any agreement could have been arrived at in regard to the Far Eastern problem. But for it there could have been no Five Power Treaty regarding the limitation of armaments, no Far Eastern Treaty, nor any Nine Power Treaty regarding China. As the Prime Minister has said, the Conference marks an epoch in the world's history. It was called at a time when the clouds looked black. There was in progress between the United States of America and Japan a competitive race in respect to naval construction, the inevitable result of which must have been war. The Conference was completely successful in its immediate object. President Harding called it together to—

Find a satisfactory basis for an agreement as to limitation of armaments, and with an earnest desire that an interchange of views at a Conference might find a solution of the Pacific and Far Eastern problems.

I think that a solution—not a permanent, but a temporary solution—of these two problems has been found. A permanent solution of the Pacific problem, in my opinion, can never be found without taking Russia into account, nor can any lasting settlement of the Far Eastern question, and that relating to the position of China, be secured without the agreement and consent of Russia. Although, as was to be expected from its position, the Conference has failed to find a permanent solution of the Pacific and Far Eastern problems, it has found one that will be effective for ten years. It has converted a competitive rivalry in naval construction between the United States of America and Japan, which was fraught with big possibilities of war, into a Treaty,

Article 2 of which provides for frank communication between the Powers in the event of the rights of any of them being threatened by the aggressive action of any other Power. That such a result was possible was due to the atmosphere created at the very beginning of the Conference by the memorable and striking pronouncement of Mr. Charles E. Hughes, Secretary of State for the United States of America, and to the continuance of that atmosphere as the result of the outstanding qualities of the leader of the British Delegation, at that time the Right Hon. A. J. Balfour, and now Earl Balfour. Earl Balfour crowned a long life spent in the public service of the British Empire with this great service to humanity at large. The Empire was undoubtedly fortunate in having this great statesman available to take part in the mission to the United States of America. Earl Balfour has proved himself *persona grata* in many Continental countries, and in America no Englishman has created a better reputation or has been more favorably received. I was in the United States of America during part of the year 1917, when Earl Balfour was there, and can say that his reception was quite as good as that given to any members of the French Delegation, although at the time France was "well in the boom." Then, again, the expert assistance that the British Delegation had at hand was undoubtedly of a very high order. It seems to be the unanimous opinion of those qualified to judge that, as Senator Pearce mentions in his report, the Conference was very much indebted to that expert assistance for the accurate and reliable data that was always at hand.

Although there is no element of doubt regarding the position of the British representatives at the Conference, I think that this House is entitled to a much clearer expression of opinion than it has yet had as to what was the exact status of the Dominion representatives. Senator Pearce, in his report, states—

I was selected by the Government as the representative of the Commonwealth of Australia, and thereupon the Governor-General, with the advice of the Federal Executive Council, prayed His Majesty to issue to me Letters Patent, nominating and appointing me as His representative in respect of the Commonwealth of Australia at the Conference. The King, on the 24th day of October, 1921, by Letters Patent

under the Great Seal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, issued to me a full power, appointing me Commissioner, Procurator, and Plenipotentiary in respect of the Commonwealth of Australia. Except that it is limited to the Commonwealth of Australia, it is identical with the full powers issued to the British representatives from the United Kingdom.

The full text of the Letters Patent is given in Appendix A of the report furnished by Senator Pearce. If there was thus a grant of full power as the document, on the face of it, seems to suggest, then this Parliament has not received full information regarding the status and position of its representative. When we look abroad we find that very much more information has been given in the other Dominion Parliaments than has ever been furnished to this House. On the return of the Prime Minister from Great Britain last year I pointed out that we were not receiving that information to which we were entitled in regard to the Imperial Conference. In Canada there has been a publication not merely of the Prime Minister's speech, and of a White Book; but there has also been presented to the Canadian Parliament a verbatim report of the whole of the proceedings of the last Imperial Conference. This, by the way, is said to differ very materially in many respects from the paper which was laid on the table of this House. So far as I can gather, the position, as put before us by the Prime Minister in October last, was—

1. That the Dominions had not been directly invited by the United States of America.
2. That at the Imperial Conference it was arranged that the Imperial Government should represent the whole Empire at Washington.
3. That the Imperial Government would prefer the British Delegation to include men with special knowledge of Canadian, Australasian, and Indian points of view.

This latter statement is borne out by a cablegram from Mr. Lloyd George to Mr. Hughes, which the Prime Minister read in this House last session—

I am very anxious that the stand-point of Australia and New Zealand should be well represented on the British Empire delegation at the Washington Conference. Your personal presence is, in my opinion, highly desirable, and I urge you to go if by any means possible. Failing this, a single delegate may serve as representative of both Australia and New Zealand, as your stand-points are identical. I should greatly prefer you going yourself, but if you cannot, please consult Massey, and tell

*Dr. Earle Page.*

me what you propose. We will, of course, also welcome any officer whom you may wish to send to serve on the secretariat.

The Government, so far as I could gather at the time, sent Senator Pearce to Washington, not as a special representative of Australia, with a seat in the Conference, but as part and parcel of the British Empire delegation, his duty being to represent the Australian view on that delegation. So far as I can ascertain, our information ceases at this point. I have carefully looked through the speech made by Senator Pearce, in another place, with respect to the Washington Conference, and I find that he makes no reference to this phase of the subject. The Prime Minister, when speaking in the House last week, made a very brief and cursory reference to the position. That reference as it stands is quite ambiguous, but I hope that, before the debate closes, he will enlarge upon it, and let us know the exact position. The right honorable gentleman, in submitting this motion, said—

The Imperial Conference understood that the United States of America Government would not favour an invitation being extended to representatives of the overseas Dominions. But, happily, as the result of diplomatic conversations, this difficulty was overcome, and the British Empire Delegation included representatives of the overseas Dominions, who went to the Conference as representatives of His Majesty the King, and sat at the Conference on a footing of absolute equality with the representatives of the United Kingdom.

I should like the right honorable gentleman to say whether that means that these delegates went to the Conference with the same right to discuss and vote as was enjoyed by any other member of the British delegation, or whether, as we understood last year, there were simply to be three delegates with voting and delegate powers, and that the representatives of the Dominions were simply to be consultative members of the delegation.

MR. HUGHES.—They were the six representatives of one country, which country is made up of many countries. Australia is one of those countries.

DR. EARLE PAGE.—Was our position finally at the Washington Conference exactly the same as it was at the Peace negotiations in Paris?

MR. HUGHES.—Yes; in each case we were there as His Majesty's representatives, and in each case we were there as His Majesty's representatives upon the recommendation of the Prime Minister of



Great Britain, who submitted to His Majesty the names of the representatives of the British Empire. That was the constitutional procedure.

Dr. EARLE PAGE.—I take it that that was quite a different position from what was anticipated when the Prime Minister in this House, last October, dealt with the representation of Australia at the Conference.

Mr. HUGHES.—It was anticipated then that the representation of the Dominions would involve something more than representation of the Empire as a unit, and therefore the United States of America was disinclined to recognise anything more than the unit, that is to say, the Empire.

Dr. EARLE PAGE.—I should like to be clear on this matter because, in its issue of 13th July last, the *Sydney Morning Herald*, in a leading article, practically denied that Australia had any independent representation as at Paris. It specifically denied the position as just stated by the Prime Minister.

Mr. HUGHES.—I am stating the official position.

Dr. EARLE PAGE.—I am aware that what the Prime Minister is now saying is absolutely correct. I want to show exactly the position in Canada, and to emphasize the necessity for far more publicity and frankness in regard to the whole question of Imperial negotiations, so that public opinion in the Commonwealth will be able to keep abreast of public opinion in all the other Dominions. As the bond which holds the Empire together is essentially a sentimental one, we run much danger of being misunderstood in other parts of the Empire, and ultimately disruption may be brought about unless the fullest publicity is given to the position in each part of the Empire.

Mr. HUGHES.—It was the same at the Paris Conference. We had many opinions amongst ourselves, but finally one opinion prevailed, and Mr. Lloyd George presented it.

Dr. EARLE PAGE.—Yet, on 13th July, the *Sydney Morning Herald* specifically denied that that was so, but, as the Prime Minister has said, that contention is contrary to fact. In order to show that, although this is not understood in Australia, it is perfectly understood in Canada, I shall quote from a report of a debate which took place in the Canadian

House of Commons, late in April and early in May. The question was first raised during the debate on the Address-in-Reply, and a charge was brought against the Prime Minister of Canada that he had not fought for the separate representation of Canada at Washington such as was ultimately obtained. I wish to put this report on record in *Hansard*, so that there may be no element of doubt regarding what took place in Canada, especially as it outlines the exact sequence of events—

Ottawa, May 1.—Correspondence tabled in the House by Premier King this afternoon with regard to the appointment of Sir Robert Borden to attend the recent Disarmament Conference in Washington goes far to clear up a controversy between the Premier and the Right Hon. Arthur Meighen, which during the present session has led to some decidedly heated passages. During the debate on the address, Mr. Meighen vehemently denied that he was a party to any arrangement at the Imperial Conference of Premiers, held in London last summer, that Canada should be represented at Washington merely by a delegation appointed by the British Government, and taking its directions from the British Government. "Nor," said Mr. Meighen, "was such an arrangement arrived at while I was a member of the Conference. Our negotiations took place in this regard by correspondence, and from the first I insisted that we should have our delegate, and that that delegate should take his instructions from us." Mr. Meighen's denial was in reply to an alleged statement of the British Prime Minister to this effect: "As regards the Dominions and India, it was arranged at the recent Imperial Conference that His Majesty's Government should represent the whole of the Empire at Washington."

It is well established that ex-Premier Meighen and General Smuts left the Imperial Conference before the matter was decided, and it is hinted that thereafter certain Dominion delegates were induced to accept the principle that Great Britain would represent the Empire at the Washington Conference, but the correspondence does not clearly bear out the contention of Mr. Meighen that, in the correspondence which followed, he insisted from the first that Canada should elect her own delegate, and that delegate should take his instructions "from us."

The outstanding fact contained in the correspondence brought down to-day is that to General Smuts, of South Africa, Canada is indebted for her representation and defined status at the Disarmament Conference. The correspondence shows that General Smuts, who left at the same time as Premier Meighen, did flatly and abruptly decline to accept the status of the Dominion as at first laid down by the British Foreign Office. It shows, further, that he firmly advised Mr. Meighen that Canada should take a similar stand.

Mr. Meighen was contemplating a general election about that time; that is probably some excuse for the fact that he did not take the advice of the South African Premier, but instead concurred in the proposal to have "the Canadian viewpoint," looked after by a delegate on the British panel, in the person of Sir Robert Borden. In the meantime, however, the British authorities, having also been cabled to by General Smuts, decided that it were better to accede to the latter's request. Mr. Meighen was duly notified to this effect. The consequence was, that Sir Robert went to Washington, not as a simple delegate on the British panel, but as a "Commissioner and plenipotentiary in respect of the Dominion of Canada, with full power and authority to conclude treaties, conventions, and agreements."

The correspondence is highly interesting in view of the almost incessant clashes which occur in the Commons with regard to varying views of Canada's status as a nation.

On August 27 last, in a private and personal message to Lloyd George, Mr. Meighen said he was "most anxious to know the method by which it is proposed to provide for representation of Canada on the British Empire delegation." A reply was received to this which was not illuminating, but the formal invitation from Washington invites "the Government of Great Britain to participate in a conference on the subject of limitation of armaments." No mention was made in this invitation of the overseas Dominions. On August 19, Lord Curzon, then Foreign Secretary, accepted the invitation "on behalf of His Majesty's Government," and still there was no mention of the Dominions. On October 3, Lloyd George cabled Mr. Meighen in part: "I am most anxious for standpoint of Canada to be well represented on British Empire delegation at approaching conference in Washington." On the same day Mr. Meighen cabled: "I desire to nominate Sir Robert Borden as member of the British Empire delegation." No word of Canada.

In a cabled explanation the same day Mr. Lloyd George told Mr. Meighen: "It was arranged at the recent Imperial Conference that His Majesty's Government should represent the whole Empire at Washington. While quite prepared to represent the Dominions, His Majesty's Government would prefer the British delegation to send men with special knowledge of Canadian, Australasian, and Indian points of view."

Then on October 19, General Smuts took a hand. He cabled direct to Premier Meighen from Pretoria, his protest, which reads: "I notice from press that you are sending representative to Washington Conference. I do not know whether you have received invitation from United States through British Government or otherwise. Would very strongly urge that you should press for such invitation before sending delegate. United States did not ratify Peace Treaty to which we are signatories as component independent States of British Empire. On the contrary, agitation in Congress against our independent voting power in League of Nations was direct challenge to new Dominion status. This is first great international Conference after Paris,

and if Dominions concerned are not invited and yet attend bad precedent will be set and Dominion status will suffer. If a stand is made now and America acquiesces our equal status is finally won." General Smuts sent the same cable to Lloyd George.

The latter cabled Premier Meighen on October 21, giving way to Smuts' view. Part of the cable reads: "I am completely in accord, of course, with his (Smuts) view that Dominion representatives should hold the same status as at Paris. Foreign Office proposes with your approval to submit to the King full power for each Dominion representative to sign only on behalf of his respective Dominion, in accordance with the precedent established at Paris. Under this procedure, signature of each Dominion delegate will be necessary, in addition to signature of British delegates, to commit British Empire delegation as a whole to any agreement made at the Conference, and any Dominion delegate can, if he wishes, reserve assent on behalf of his Government."

In the meantime Canadian Privy Council minute of October 22 says: "It has been arranged that a representative of Canada should be appointed as a member of the delegation which will represent the British Empire at the Conference."

On October 22, Mr. Meighen turned down the suggestion of General Smuts, cabling as follows: "In view of the fact that the Conference is by invitation, brief time intervenes before meeting. Do not think possible that subject could be reviewed between London and Washington now to attain end you desire."

Four days later Mr. Meighen, as Prime Minister, cabled Lloyd George accepting the revised views which came about by the pressure of General Smuts. This cable reads: "With reference to your telegram October 21, respecting position of Dominion representatives at Washington Conference. In the circumstances to which you allude we agree to proposed procedure. In accordance therewith minute of council will be passed and transmitted as basis for issuance of full powers to representative of Canada. Essential that Dominion representatives should hold same status as at Paris and that this status must not be allowed to be prejudiced by proceedings at Washington Conference."

Before tabling the return to-day, Premier King offered to give the letter to Mr. Meighen so that he could take out any confidential matters should he so desire. Mr. Meighen retorted that such editing was a matter for the Government and the Government alone.—H.E.M.C.

Mr. WATT.—That was rather a kaleidoscopic change on the part of the Canadian Prime Minister in four days.

Dr. EARLE PAGE.—It was. Apparently the change took place on 19th October, and yet we have never been informed in this House of any difference between the status with which it was in-



tended to send Senator Pearce to Washington, and that which he actually enjoyed. I remind the House that the concluding words of Mr. Lloyd George's cablegram were—

Under this procedure signature of each Dominion delegate will be necessary, in addition to signature of British delegates, to commit British Empire delegation as a whole to any agreement made at the Conference, and any Dominion delegate can, if he wishes, reserve assent on behalf of his Government.

In view of that power of reservation, there is no question as to the responsibility this Parliament takes upon itself when it enters into an agreement of this nature, and it will have to stand up to that responsibility in full. In those circumstances, we should be informed fully as to what events transpired in connexion with the Washington Conference, and what was happening all through the negotiations. If I may condense the facts I have set out, the position is this: Both Mr. Meighen and General Smuts have vehemently denied that they were parties to any decision of the Imperial Conference that the British Government should represent the Dominions, and no evidence of any such decision appears in the verbatim report of the Conference. That report has been laid upon the table of the Canadian House of Commons, and has been available to members of the Canadian Parliament for months, but we in this Parliament have not had an opportunity of seeing it or ascertaining exactly where we stand in regard to this Conference and many other matters. The report of the Imperial Conference could not be more public on the table of this House than it is on the table of the Canadian House of Commons, and, therefore, there is no advantage gained by not making it available to honorable members.

Mr. HUGHES.—I may inform the honorable member that no report of the Imperial Conference, other than that which was distributed to the press, and was agreed upon, has been authorized to be published, except that relating to a debate on the importation of live cattle from Canada. I think the publication of that report was agreed to only about two or three weeks ago. Correspondence has been passing between the Imperial Government and the different Dominions in relation to this very matter, and it was definitely decided a few weeks ago that

nothing was to be published except that which we agreed upon.

Dr. EARLE PAGE.—The Canadian report evidently goes further.

Mr. MAXWELL.—Does it purport to be official?

Dr. EARLE PAGE.—It purports to quote from a verbatim report of the proceedings of the Imperial Conference.

Mr. HUGHES.—I feel sure that that cannot be so, otherwise the communications to which I have referred would not have passed between the different Governments. However, I shall look into the matter.

Dr. EARLE PAGE.—I am certain that the *Journal of Parliaments* of the British Empire does state that that verbatim report was made available at the beginning of March in the Canadian Parliament.

Mr. HUGHES.—I fancy the reference must be to a report which was drawn up by the Conference, and which Mr. Lloyd George laid on the table of the House of Commons. That was the report which was agreed upon, and it became common property.

Mr. WATT.—But that was not a verbatim report.

Mr. HUGHES.—Oh, no.

Dr. EARLE PAGE.—The article in the *Winnipeg Free Press* points out that there are various discrepancies between the published White Paper and the verbatim report.

Mr. HUGHES.—I shall note what the honorable member has said, and look into the matter, and shall make a statement if the facts are not as I have said.

Dr. EARLE PAGE.—Continuing my summary, Mr. Meighen and General Smuts say that they were not a party to any decision to be represented at Washington in the way first decided upon, and later departed from. General Smuts learned of this reported decision, and was instrumental in having it altered, and the Paris precedent reverted to. And as a result, the representatives of the various Dominions held the same status at Washington as they had held at Paris.

Mr. HUGHES.—Does the honorable member quite understand what I meant? The status we had at Paris and Washington was this: The Empire was represented as such; we were all representatives of the King. We were linked together by another fact—that the Prime Minister of Great Britain recommended the name

of each one of us to His Majesty, and His Majesty accepted those nominations, so that we went as representatives of the Empire, each being allotted to a different portion of the Empire.

Dr. EARLE PAGE.—That is so, as set out in the letters patent.

Mr. WATT. — The status of the Dominions' representatives at Washington was greater than that of the Dominions' representatives at Paris, inasmuch as at Washington they were present all the time, whereas at Paris they were not.

Mr. HUGHES.—The whole delegation was present at all plenary Conferences at Paris. The other Conferences at which the whole delegation was not present would be equivalent to the subsidiary Conferences at Washington, at which only Mr. Balfour, Mr. Hughes, and Baron Kato and others were present.

Dr. EARLE PAGE. — The point I wish to make is that the objection taken by the Government of the United States of America to the League of Nations by reason of the inclusion of the British Dominions has apparently now been overcome, inasmuch as the Dominions' representatives as such appeared at Washington, and were accepted with full status.

Mr. HUGHES.—It is very difficult for foreign nations to understand how it is we all claim autonomy and yet all claim to be one.

Mr. WATT.—It is also difficult for us to know how that principle will work out in the event of disagreement.

Dr. EARLE PAGE.—Yes, by reason of the very fact that the future of the Empire is endangered unless our position is properly defined, or public opinion in each Dominion is kept apprised of public opinion in other portions of the Empire.

Mr. WATT.—Suppose one plenipotentiary does not agree or one Parliament does not agree, what will be the position?

Mr. HUGHES.—It is perfectly clear that we may have all sorts of rows among ourselves, but to the outside world we must speak as one body.

Dr. EARLE PAGE.—We may have four Dominions signing without any difficulty and the fifth disagreeing. What will be the position of that fifth Dominion?

Mr. HUGHES.—“As also there are not three incomprehensibles . . . but . . . one incomprehensible.” This is simply to be accepted as an article of faith which cannot be explained.

Dr. EARLE PAGE.—What is necessary is that there should be the fullest publicity of the whole of the proceedings between the representatives of the various Dominions at any conference. My complaint is that we have not available in Australia the information that was available many months ago in Canada. If we are to get this information it should be given to us as nearly as possible at that time when the matter is agitating the public mind; otherwise, when it does come to hand, it may not influence public sentiment as it should.

Mr. MATHEWS.—What information has not been made available?

Dr. EARLE PAGE.—A great deal regarding the appointment of our plenipotentiary at the Washington Conference.

Mr. HUGHES.—The honorable member does not appreciate the different atmosphere in Canada. In that country there is a suspicion of subservience to Great Britain that must be met. Here we are all of one race, and we all have one idea in the main.

Dr. EARLE PAGE.—Those are cogent reasons for giving the fullest possible publicity to the proceedings to which I have referred, and I urge the Prime Minister to see that all cablegrams and documents are made available to honorable members, and that a complete report of the Conference proceedings is supplied at the earliest possible moment. No matter what information is given or denied to the public, it is essential that all representatives of the people in the various Parliaments of the Dominions should have a grasp of the real position. Otherwise there will be no opportunity of creating that Empire public opinion which is so necessary for the stability and permanence of the Empire. The Prime Minister in his reply, I hope, will deal with this matter much more fully than he did in his remarks last week, when he said—

The British Empire Delegation included representatives of the Overseas Dominions who went to the Conference as representatives of His Majesty the King, and sat at the Conference on a footing of absolute equality with the representatives of the United Kingdom.



indicating that we must be satisfied with this information by way of preface. We shall get into deep water unless we take soundings. Therefore, I urge the necessity for the appointment of a Committee of External Affairs chosen from honorable members of both Houses of this Parliament. Such a Committee could always be *au fait* with what is taking place in other Dominions, and its members should be able to take part in any debate in this Chamber so that they might keep other honorable members in touch with what was being done elsewhere.

MR. MATHEWS.—The honorable member has not mentioned the word "Empire" for some time.

DR. EARLE PAGE.—The Empire is good enough for me. I do not mind using "Empire" every few words, because the British Empire is easily the greatest factor that civilization has ever had.

MR. MATHEWS.—What about the people who make the Empire?

DR. EARLE PAGE.—The best hope for the people who make the Empire and the best hope for the future of the world lies in the fact that the two democratic nations of the world—Great Britain and America—have at last joined hands in a *rapprochement* which, we hope, will last for the next century, and enable that development to take place in the British Dominions which has been brought about in America under the operation of the Monroe Doctrine.

Before the Washington Conference, America and Japan were feverishly building huge fleets in competitive rivalry. As a result of the Conference they have been induced, not merely to cease building, but also to become, not actually allies, but associated in such a way that whenever their rights in any particular place are attacked they will have a frank discussion with one another. They will be brought into an atmosphere in which they can debate their differences freely and frankly. Every one knows that if one's differences can be discussed freely and frankly they are minimized, and often disappear. I am sure that if there had been such an arrangement for a free and frank discussion of European difficulties ten or fifteen years before the Great War took place, that is to say, if there had been the same *rapprochement*

between the big Empires of Europe, we might have been spared the terrible war through which the world has just passed. I do not regard the Washington Conference as being in any sense antagonistic to the League of Nations, because, no matter how great the latter may become—everyone admits that it is not functioning as well as it might at present—there will always be need for special regional conferences between the Powers, which can best be dealt with by the parties immediately affected. I feel that in regard to the Pacific, unless these preliminaries could have been properly adjusted, there could never have been any diminution in the race for increased armaments between Japan and America. The great difficulty in the way of an Anglo-American arrangement was undoubtedly the existence of the Anglo-Japanese Treaty, and the suspicion and dislike of that Treaty displayed by the people of America. Before our Prime Minister left Australia to attend the Imperial Conference, he made a speech which was indorsed practically by the whole of the people of Australia, and in which he expressed the desire, on behalf of Australia, that the Anglo-Japanese Treaty might be modified in such a form as to include America or any other Pacific Power that would care to enter into it. That we were anxious to achieve this object is shown in the exception in the Arbitration Treaty of 1914 effected between the United States of America and Great Britain, making it apply to Article 4 of the Anglo-Japanese Treaty of 1911. As the result of the Conference at Washington we have a satisfactory arrangement, whereby not merely has America been able to come to an understanding with Japan and the British Empire, but the other Pacific Power, France, has been able to come to terms, and has been included in the Quadruple Treaty.

The most satisfactory feature of this Treaty is the fact that it has completely altered the relations of the two great branches of the English-speaking race—the United States of America and the British Empire. That *rapprochement*, it seems to me, is the best guarantee we have for the future peace of the world. The old trouble between these two countries was fomented by the unhealed Irish sore and by German propaganda. During the

war, books, such as that written by Owen Wister, undoubtedly tended to remove a great deal of the old prejudice which existed towards Great Britain, by putting American history in its true light. I have in my possession an American school text-book in which many of the early events of American history were given in a grossly distorted form to the American child, causing him to grow up with prejudice against the people of the British Empire. The position was improved by the visit of Mr. Balfour to America in 1917. Now these two great countries have been united in a Treaty whereby they agree to discuss their differences in a most frank and candid fashion, and under which combined they will have a proportion of ten capital ships as against those held by the rest of the world—at the present time of seven. In the Anglo-American naval supremacy, I repeat, lies the greatest hope for the future peace of the world. It is only natural that these two great countries should combine in this fashion, because their attitude has been the same throughout almost the whole of the last century. The earliest excursion of the American to extra-territorial waters for any distance was in an endeavour to quell the Barbary pirates in the Mediterranean, and the British fleet has undoubtedly rid all the seas of the world of pirates, rendering the oceans open to the navigation of every nation. America's attitude towards its colonial possessions has been the very same as ours. America's idea in regard to the people of the Philippines has been to encourage them to reach a state in which they will be fitted for self-government. Great Britain has endeavoured to encourage all her Dominions to so develop that they shall be fitted to take possession of their own affairs, and, although it may be urged that, in this process, the Dominions have not only achieved self-government, but have been able to assist her trade and commerce, who will say that that is not merely a fitting reward? There is no reason why the ox should be muzzled while treading out the corn.

I support the ratification of the Quadruple Treaty, because, in the first place, there will now be less likelihood of future naval wars. There are distinctly lessened possibilities of conflict between the na-

tions because, now, they can find meeting grounds for the friendly discussion of all points at issue. There is also the tremendous factor that this Treaty will have rendered possible the limitation of armaments. The most important clause of the Treaty—Article 2—provides for frank communication between the various Powers in the event of the rights of any of them being threatened by aggressive action. Ratification is provided for by all Parliaments, and that ratification brings the Anglo-Japanese Alliance to an end in a dignified fashion and without any question of injury to the feelings of any Power. The Treaty is to hold good for ten years—breathing time, at least—and there is to be twelve months' notice of intention to denounce it. While it brings to an end the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, the friendly relations between the two nations—Great Britain and Japan—are not to be broken.

MR. PRATTEN.—Does the honorable member agree that this Treaty will bring the Anglo-Japanese Alliance to an end?

DR. EARLE PAGE.—When it is ratified, it will automatically do so; the Quadruple Treaty will supersede that Alliance. The reduction of naval armaments appears to have been brought about and agreed upon in a manner satisfactory, at any rate, to Great Britain and the United States of America. These two nations together will be superior to the rest of the world. It is only fair that America should now, and during the next century, bear some of the burdens which Great Britain has carried in the name of civilization during the past century. The agreement with respect to limitation of armaments now makes the two great English-speaking peoples responsible, jointly, for the peace of the world, as distinct from the peace of Europe. The limitation is such as is bound to make for the great advancement of all the nations. It must very materially assist the development of undeveloped countries such as our own. The cost of one capital ship, when the money involved is turned to the development of a land like Australia, must be an immense factor. It would be equivalent to the cost of many miles of developmental railway, to the endowment of Universities, to the installation of hydro-electric plants, and the extension of telephonic and allied facilities in country districts.

*Dr. Earle Page.*



With respect to submarines, I can appreciate the attitude of France. I think that, perceiving acutely the position of that country and people, her delegates at the Conference were only reasonable in adopting and maintaining the attitude which they did. France must have some means of keeping free and open her way to Africa.

As for the laws governing the use of submarines, I fear that rules of warfare will always be as they have been in the past. That is to say, they will have been framed only to be broken when a nation has its back against the wall.

Mr. MAXWELL.—They will be strictly kept in times of peace.

Dr. EARLE PAGE.—Just so. But one factor for good may come of the framing of such rules as were advanced at the Conference; that is to say, they may help to create a world opinion which, during time of war, should, at any rate, mitigate the ferocity of submarine aggression.

With respect to aircraft, one sees at once the impossibility of limitation. Respecting this line of defence, however, we should recognise the necessity for encouraging the Australian manufacture of aircraft. Flying machines are indispensable. If we are to defend ourselves, we should do all that may be done to encourage to the utmost civil aviation. Thus will we stimulate the training of pilots and the establishment and development of factories to turn out machines and make repairs in the unhappy event of further warfare. Possibly, one reason why the nations displayed such readiness to forego the building of capital ships lay in the shrewd suspicion that the next war will be decided, not on the land or in the water, but in the air.

As for the limitation of land armaments, surely no one believes that there could be brought about any reduction of armies in the light of the present conditions of Europe. But I think that, eventually, the nations should be just as capable of coming to a common state of mind whereby land armaments may be reduced as in the matter of naval armaments. The way in which to reach this objective should be along the line of creating a world-wide moral atmosphere. The peoples are sick of being taxed merely for the purposes of killing and being killed.

As another outcome of the Washington Conference, it appears that China is at last about to be given a fairer deal, although she will not be getting anything like that to which she is entitled. Indeed, the substance of the Treaty, as it bears upon China, does not measure up to the grandiloquent character of its opening phrases concerning sovereignty and the rights of self-government. For example, there are the stipulations with respect to the amount of Customs duties which China may enforce. So long as outside powers can control a nation's Customs policy, its people cannot be said to possess a very great measure of governmental independence.

The subject of insular possessions provides for Japan, really, a very definite victory. That country will be the only nation near enough to China to have a fortified Naval Base of any value, thus being placed in a very strong strategical position.

As for Australia, our position has been materially altered by the decision in respect of naval armaments. Our own Navy is our first line of defence. It was one of which we had some reason to be proud, seven or eight years ago; but now we possess merely a truncated remnant. We have only three cruisers and a few other small units. Australia, though a great continent, is still an island; and, therefore, she must rely for her first line of defence upon the Navy. But to-day we have drifted into a situation which is truly Gilbertian. We should endeavour to attract to our Naval Force the finest brains and the best talent developing in the community; but no one nowadays would recommend his boy to enter a Navy in which, after thirty or forty years' service, he might hope, at best, to be given charge of a cruiser. We should very seriously consider the question of our contribution to the Naval defence of the Empire. If we are not going to undertake expenditure in the provision of actual ships, or in direct contribution to the Imperial Navy, we should still spend the equivalent upon another strong line of defence, namely, the encouragement and development of immigration. Our contribution should be employed in the provision of means for the definite settlement of immigrants, for our best line of

future defence must be our own population.

I trust, especially, that the outcome of this debate will be to lift the consideration of our Imperial and external policies above the party arena. With the ratification of these Treaties we should recognise the necessity for laying down some firm and constant policy regarding the Imperial connexion and our outlook upon external affairs—a policy, I emphasize, which should be stable, no matter what may be the changing fortunes of politicians and parties. Irrespective of the general political views of the party in power, there should be an unbroken effort to develop a tradition for Australia respecting Imperial and external relationships. One factor which would assist in bringing about such a state of affairs would be the establishment of a permanent committee, drawn from both the Federal Houses, upon Imperial and external affairs.

Mr. WEST.—We have enough to do to look after our own affairs.

Dr. EARLE PAGE.—Surely, in a Parliament comprising 111 representative men whose first interest, naturally is the promotion of the welfare of Australia, there could be selected seven to eleven members who could be given the responsible task, while maintaining their touch with the affairs of the Commonwealth itself, of directing their outlook upon the welfare of the Empire as a whole, and of civilization generally. For the best interests of Australia are bound up with the maintenance of the Imperial connexion, and in taking our proper place as an independent unit of that Empire in the affairs of the world. Our very national existence depends upon this: and, in order to make ourselves secure, it is essential that our people should be provided with the fullest information. Only by such means will it be possible to keep alive the sentimental bond of Empire. It is necessary that all the people and all parties should be able to exercise a right and proper view-point upon great public matters. This can be provided only by the dissemination of full and complete information covering the views and aspirations of every part of the British Empire, and, generally, of the peoples of the nations. The spread of knowledge respecting our sister Dominions should be in the direction, not merely of

such matters as defence and constitutional status; we should get to know, also, their resources and conditions of life. Trade relationships should be fostered far more than can be said of them at present. We missed a great opportunity only recently—in relation to the sister Dominion of New Zealand—in that we did not, while the Tariff debate was proceeding, maintain continual inter-communication so that there might have been brought about a condition of affairs fully satisfactory both to New Zealand and ourselves. New Zealand is close to us, geographically, compared with other British Dominions; and we have manifest points of similarity along the lines of production.

In conclusion, I would say that the Washington Conference has been very valuable from every point of view. In these Treaties there are to be found definite practical results. There has been created some degree, at least, of world opinion, which should go to the making of better international understandings; so that war, in future, should be much more difficult of precipitation. The Empire is to be congratulated upon the results which have been achieved. The fact of the limitation of naval armaments will relieve us of heavy financial burdens, and if the savings in respect of the construction of battleships can be utilized in the directions which I have already indicated—developmental and reproductive—there will have been achieved a vast amount of good. We shall have made the defence of the Empire a much more easy matter than it is at present. And Australia, instead of being one of the weakest links in the chain—the Achilles heel—will have become one of the Empire's greatest bulwarks. The attitude of Great Britain and the self-governing Dominions at the Washington Conference was such that it maintained, throughout, the British tradition of magnanimity that is in conformity with our Empire traditions, and the position it has held for the last hundred years as the most advanced leader of thought and freedom in the world.

Sir ROBERT BEST (Kooyong) [4.50].—We should be very gratified, indeed, with the unanimity, which is hardly characteristic of the House, shown in the adoption of the various resolutions as submitted by the Prime Minister (Mr.



Hughes). I venture to say that few events in history have been more pregnant with possibilities of fruitful achievement than the Washington Conference. The honorable gentleman (Dr. Earle Page) made a reference to the subject of the representation of Australia at that Conference and at the Paris Conference. This is a matter that was arranged with consummate skill by the British Government. As a consequence of the war, the Dominions' status has been changed—the relationship between the Mother Country and the Dominions has been radically altered. In 1917 the Prime Ministers, who had been made members of the Imperial Cabinet, formulated a document in which it was claimed that the several Dominions should have the right to separate representation at the Paris Conference. Some of these Prime Ministers, notably General Smuts and the Canadian Prime Minister, claimed that the Dominions should be left to negotiate separately, even outside the Empire. I do not think, however, that these claims can be seriously contemplated or considered, or that they mean exactly what was verbally said. The position is that we are either within or without the Empire; if we are within the Empire it practically means that, while we have our separate status, which entitles us to consultation as to the foreign policy of the Empire, and to consultation as to the formulation of those matters of common interest to the Empire, yet not one of the Dominions can fairly claim any representation outside the Empire.

Mr. BRENNAN.—Then where is the radical change?

Sir ROBERT BEST.—Hitherto the practice had been for the British Government to itself settle the foreign policy of the Empire without consultation with the Dominions, and to deal with all external questions in relation to the Empire, no matter which Dominion was affected. The change lay in giving to the various Dominions the separate right to consultation and to representation as Empire delegates. In dealing with the question of representation at the Paris Conference, it was recognised that outside nations looked on the British Empire as a unit, and desired to treat it as a unit. Sub-

sequently the representatives whom we sent to the Paris Conference, in conjunction with Great Britain, were regarded as delegates of the British Empire—not the delegates of the United Kingdom or the Dominions alone, but the delegates of the British Empire. When it was determined by President Harding to call a Conference, he refused to recognise the separate representation of the Dominions; but he treated the Empire as a unit. This was recognised by the British Government, and they followed the practice adopted in regard to the Paris Conference: that is, they held that, as the interests of the Empire were of a varied character, and the family of nations which constituted the Empire was made up of autonomous States or nations, each should have the right to nominate a delegate, who was accepted by the British Government. So it came about that the whole interests of the Empire were represented, and that is a very substantial advance. The position now is that, by reason of the development and alteration of the relationship, which has been gradually evolved during the period of the war and up to the present time, we are now entitled to consultation with the British Government as to the foreign policy of the Empire, and consultation in regard to those matters which are of common Empire interest.

I am sure that we admire the considerate and skilful manner in which the British Government has dealt with the great difficulties associated with the position. Of course, the Empire is looked on by the foreigner as something mysterious—he cannot understand it. We, ourselves, realize that the Empire is very delicate in its mechanism and control, in view of the fact that there is no rigid Constitution. But there is the process of consultation by Imperial Conference whereby we are able to co-ordinate our policy within the Empire, and then present it as an Empire policy to the outside world. That is a position which I hope we, as a loyal Dominion of the Empire, will recognise, because, as I said before, we must either be within or without the Empire. If we are within the Empire, we must co-ordinate our policy within the Empire, but if we ask for separate representation outside the Empire, then we are going to bring about the destruction of the Empire, with

complications of grave and serious character with the outside world.

Mr. BRENNAN.—For once, I agree with the honorable member.

Sir ROBERT BEST.—I am very pleased to hear the honorable member say so. The subject of the League of Nations has also been mentioned. I confess frankly that I am one who believes most firmly in the League of Nations, and what it is capable of accomplishing. The world deplores the absence from that League of the United States of America. It was felt at once that the League could not be complete until the United States of America was included; but, as it was not, we are under a deep obligation to President Harding and the United States of America Government for the Washington Conference. We are sincerely hopeful that that Conference will prove a substantial step towards bringing into the League, not only the United States of America, but also those nations with whom we fought in the recent war. Germany, Russia, and Austria—or whatever is left of the latter—have a right to be recognised and admitted as members of the League of Nations. This League is a great and noble ideal, and I hope that any influence that can be exercised by Australia towards breathing power and strength into it may be accomplished. But we have to take things as we find them, and realize that the United States of America at present does not see eye to eye with us in regard to the League of Nations. Therefore, when there came a proposition from the United States of America as to another means of achieving what the League of Nations was designed to achieve, we could only fall in with the idea. The Washington Conference was in itself a great conception, and it became a powerful factor, and a great success by reason of the courage which was shown in connexion with the business dealt with by Charles Evans Hughes. It was recognised before the bringing together of the Conference that the Versailles Treaty, although it purported to accomplish a great deal towards the settlement of peace terms, had created its own complications of a most profound and difficult character. The world still continued perturbed, and black and portentous clouds remained on the horizon. The idea of the Washington Conference was the possibility of bringing about some harmony,

and securing a general peace. That was one object, and another one was to put an end to the competition throughout the world in armaments. Hundreds of millions of pounds were yearly expended by nations in competing with one another in armaments, and the burden of taxation was so great that the noble ideal was suggested of a naval holiday.

The Washington Conference was indeed unique, and the work it achieved is unparalleled in history. It was of a character that compares favorably with anything, and, indeed, surpasses anything, previously done. I feel that we are deeply indebted, not only to the United States of America, but to the Mother Country itself, for, great as might have been the conception and object of America, that Conference would not have succeeded but for the generous and magnanimous attitude of the British Government. The British nation had most to lose. It had previously had a two-power standard, and had held supremacy of the seas, and it was recognised that the British Empire could not live except for the British Navy. Under these circumstances, the British nation entered into this Conference, and offered a great example. The Empire was fortunate in the appointment, as the head of the delegation, of the present Earl Balfour, who showed the greatest wisdom and prudence in the discharge of the high and onerous duties imposed upon him. It was for these reasons that that Conference proved the magnificent success it ultimately became. While it is true that the Conference did not abolish war, at the same time it made the mightiest strides towards that object that have ever yet been taken. While it is true that the Conference did not bring about disarmament, it provided in a firm and definite manner for the limitation of armaments, and for a naval holiday. After long consultation and sacrifice, the naval ratio was agreed to, with the result that, for a period of ten years, the peace of the world should be assured, and the nations trained in the ways of peace. That is a mighty accomplishment, which we are pleased to recognise. We all remember the fears and troubles we had in connexion with the Pacific question. They were complex and far-reaching, and prolific of international difference and strife. By the same conciliatory spirit the



Pacific Pact was established. It provides, amongst other things, that there shall be no fortifications in the Mandated Territories, and that there shall be frank communication between the nations in regard to any question of difference which may arise. There is to be a meeting of all the parties concerned, and a settlement is to be arrived at in that way. The Washington Conference is a monumental object lesson of what can be brought about by what is colloquially known as a round-table conference, or, in other words, by means of consultation and conciliation. Any difference in relation to the Pacific is to be settled in that way. There is no doubt that the United States of America had its own great national objects to serve in regard to the Far Eastern question. It entered into the Conference with the policy of the open-door for China as its objective, and in that respect it was singularly successful. It has a large trade with China; about one-tenth of its export trade is with that country. China offers an unlimited market. It has been calculated that out of the total population of something like 445,000,000, only some 9,000,000 or 10,000,000 of the people of China are purchasers of goods from abroad, and it is realized that as China develops it will offer an unlimited market for not only American goods, but the products of all parts of the world. Recognising this, the United States of America went into the Conference with the object of making secure the open-door policy in China, which it had initiated many years ago. It desired to develop and strengthen that policy. Japan intended, no doubt, to try to conserve, as far as she could, her great and powerful interests in China. Her main trade is done with China, and she has practically looked upon that country as a field for exploitation. Japan has been marvellously successful in that respect. At the Conference she had to make some sacrifices, and her representatives left it no doubt more or less disappointed that they were unable to maintain all that she had secured, and all that she hoped to achieve.

I pay my tribute of respect and regard to Japan for the spirit displayed by her in entering the Conference, and dealing in a broad and generous way with questions involving the naval ratio, and her interests in China. That vast and mysterious country—China—hoped in turn to

achieve a political and economic status such as she had not previously possessed. She accomplished a great deal; but did not secure all that she could have desired. I do not wish to discount the splendid services of the Conference in relation to the Far Eastern question. They were efforts of magnitude—fine efforts of statesmanship—and splendid strides were made towards the settlement of the outstanding differences which obtained between the nations concerned. In respect to all these matters, I gladly say that we pay our tribute of admiration to the splendid and magnificent work which has been accomplished by the Conference.

The subject of submarine warfare has been mentioned. We all deeply regret that nothing has been accomplished in regard to the abolition or even the limitation of the use of submarines; but in so far as it is possible to contemplate the paradoxical term of civilized warfare—so far as the honour of nations may be relied upon—sound and humane conditions in regard to the use of submarines were laid down by the Conference. These, if observed, will largely minimize the barbarities and atrocities that were associated with submarine warfare during the last great world conflict. It is to be hoped that the provision which has been made will at least secure for the world some immunity from attacks such as those which resulted in the sinking of the *Lusitania* and other great merchant vessels. Provision has been made, so far as it can be made, that no merchant vessel shall be submarined until at least the innocent travelling public thereon are taken off and provided with some safe refuge.

MR. WEST.—Does the honorable member think that arrangement will be carried out?

SIR ROBERT BEST.—We can utter the pious hope that it will be. If warfare is to be carried on as it was in connexion with the recent great war, when agreements and treaties became scraps of paper, it is quite possible that these conditions may not be observed. But a severe moral lesson attaches to the last war. Germany, the arch enemy which was guilty of this departure from the honouring of obligations, was taught a lesson such as the world cannot altogether forget. The contempt, contumely, and hatred that were brought on Germany

by reason of her refusal to honour her Treaty obligations is a thing that can never be forgotten.

I join with other honorable members who in the course of this debate have expressed regret that the Conference did nothing in regard to land armaments. The outlook for the future, however, is hopeful. Such a splendid stride has been made with respect to the reduction of naval armaments, and such a monumental object lesson has been given as to what is possible of accomplishment even in the most difficult of international problems, that the Conference has given a trend to public thought, and has further encouraged public opinion that war shall be brought to an end if possible. There is reason to hope, therefore, that something may be done in respect to land armaments in the not distant future. The moral influence of the Washington Conference in that respect, together with what was accomplished by it in regard to naval defence, may be effective in directing the course that should be followed with respect to land armaments, and I hope that the decisions arrived at as to the use of poisoned gas and submarines will bring about good results in relation to all other branches of warfare.

**Mr. WEST** (East Sydney) [5.15].—Some honorable members who have addressed themselves to this question seem to be somewhat mixed in regard to Imperial matters, and to take the view that Australia is not a self-governing Dominion. I shall use my best efforts to prevent any interference whatever with the self-government of Australia. It would be a great thing if by means of oratory a stop could be put to all warfare. If oratory could put an end to war it seems to me that we have had enough in connexion with the Washington Conference to rid the world for all time of that scourge. I am inclined to think, however, that those who have been indulging in flights of oratory in connexion with the achievements of the Conference are not sincere. Some of the great men of the world have merely been endeavouring to gull the people, and there is, I fear, no sincerity in their proposals. It is refreshing to me to find that the resolutions agreed to by the Conference have been

submitted to Parliament for ratification. This is quite a new departure. I have devoted much time to a study of historical questions, and particularly to the proceedings of the British Parliament in the days of Palmerston and others, and I have come to the conclusion that an end can be put to war only by making war a people's question. If we are to have an advanced civilization, and that civilization is to be an educated Democracy, then all disputes between nations should first of all be submitted to the Parliaments concerned, and the question of war or no war should be determined by a referendum. In all parts of the world the conscription referendum in Australia has been discussed, and our action in submitting the question to the people has been appreciated. The time has come when the people of most European nations, and certainly the people of the United States of America, will no longer allow the question of whether they should or should not engage in war to be determined by a few individuals. I repeat that when we make war a people's question we shall put an end to war.

Some honorable members think that great results will flow from the Washington Conference, and particularly from the resolutions arrived at as to the way in which warlike operations shall be carried out. When a nation goes to war, however, its sole object is to win. It cares not whether it uses poison gas or submarines—whether it fights in the air, on the earth, or below the waters—so long as it can secure a victory. The man who can invent some mighty instrument for the destruction of humanity in such circumstances is acclaimed a hero, and every opportunity afforded him for perfecting his deadly device.

We shall shortly be having a general election. Are we to pass a resolution directing that the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) shall on that occasion tell the people of Australia the truth? It would be just as easy to compel him by that means to tell the truth as it would be to graft a pair of wings on to myself.

The world war was brought about by a nation of 70,000,000 people, with the highest birth rate in the world, desiring an outlet for its surplus population. And



war will come again when some other nation wants better facilities for its development, and is prevented by other nations from getting it. What it cannot get by consent it will seek to get by force, in order that the future of its growing population may not be restricted. These are influences which cannot be controlled by a set of resolutions or regulations. Of course, the resolutions passed at Washington gave a big advertisement to the men who were responsible for them. But any man with a knowledge of the world knows that the people who are in control of society to-day will not readily surrender their powers. The instinctive desire to dominate will manifest itself in the future as it has done in the past, and there will be no preventive of war until the industrial classes of the world come together with a pledge not to destroy each other. They are the people who have to bear the burden of war. To-day vested interests dominate the world. Theirs is the hidden hand that keeps the present Government in power in the Commonwealth. Study the social and industrial conditions of to-day, and do we find the ruling classes striving to keep up the standard of living? All that we have fought for industrially and economically since little children were sold in Spitalfields is at stake. This talk about forbidding nations to use poison gases makes one smile at the thought that there are so many credulous people in the world. We might as well tell rival armies that they must not use tooth-powder to blow each other's brains out. Though we may not all approve of the methods of the internationalists, their objective, the brotherhood of man, is very commendable, and in that policy lies all our hope of salvation from war and all its evils. We must educate the masses to a knowledge that God did not create the world for the use and enjoyment of a privileged few. There was in circulation a few years ago a book which asked what Christ would do if He returned to earth. I believe that every copy of it has been destroyed, but its principles laid the foundations of a policy that will do more for mankind than all the resolutions of disarmament conferences. We have read recently that in the British Parliament the Government experienced difficulty in getting approval for an education vote. The object of that vote is to give knowledge and intelligence to the people. That object was resisted, but for warlike ma-

chines to blow out people's brains millions of pounds can be found. Some years ago I used to propose motions at the Trades and Labour Council which some people used to ridicule as visionary, but some of those proposals have already come to pass, and others will be realized in time. If we are really desirous of preventing war we must, first of all, do away with armies. The honorable member for Kooyong (Sir Robert Best) deplored the fact that the Commonwealth had practically no land forces. That fact does not distress me at all. I hope we shall not spend a penny on land forces. All that the Commonwealth requires is a navy sufficient to police the more distant waters of the Pacific. If the public affairs of nations were conducted as they should be, there would be no necessity for naval, land, or air forces. Disarmament resolutions, like Christianity, Free Trade, and Protection, are splendid subjects to talk about. But there is no penalty to be imposed upon a nation that ignores the resolutions laid down by the Disarmament Treaties. God knows that, should any nation injure the British race, if British people are made of the same stuff as I and my forefathers, the injury will be resented, and who, then, will settle the quarrel? The only hope of preventing war is by educating the people, and allowing them to decide all questions of foreign policy. Australia has only a small population, but historians, when they write up the Great War, will set down the attitude of the Australian people towards conscription as an object lesson to the nations of the earth. That was the result of an appeal by a referendum to the people; and if the question of war or peace were put to the vote of the men and women of quarrelling nations, there would never be war. When the people have been educated, and proper ideals prevail amongst them, there will be no need for poisonous gases, submarines, or other instruments of destruction. The honorable member for Kooyong is concerned over the absence of land forces; but if we train up a body of men for war, and dress them out in pretty clothes, will not their ambition be to do the job for which the Government pays them? Therefore let us obliterate all armaments except a form of naval police

in distant waters. No nation will interfere with Australia. The economic position of the world to-day is such, as a result of the Great War, that it will take 100 years to recover the conditions of 1913. How many years will it take Australia to get back to the fine position it occupied before the war, as a result of three years of Labour Government in the Commonwealth? Honorable members opposite have been in office for eight years, and they have done nothing in comparison with what the Labour party did in three years. We took humanitarian ideas to the Government benches, and those ideas dictated the character of our legislation. We want the same ideas to prevail amongst the nations of the world. My only purpose in speaking to-day is that I may, through *Hansard*, let people on the other side of the world know the opinion of fully 95 per cent. of the population of Australia. If a plebiscite were taken of the wage-earners of the Commonwealth, they would declare that the resolutions of the Washington Conference are all very well for men who have nothing else to do. They cannot become effective unless the people so will it. And the people will not stand for dictation. However, we cannot, for quite other reasons, go to war for another fifty years—the finances of the nations will not permit it. Our first object should be that which the Internationalists seek to achieve—the brotherhood of man throughout the world. We want to eliminate from our breasts that spirit of hatred which was manifested in the recent war. When we get that feeling subdued, we can then go on to a higher and more advanced civilization which will give to God's creatures the benefits He intended them to have. Vested interests should no longer be allowed to predominate and cause men to cut one another's throats for self-advancement. I would like to deal with the Russian question, for I am confident that Russia will emerge from its present ordeal a model to the rest of the world. The struggle will be hard. We know from our own history that riots have always preceded reform. We have a small population in Australia, but the Russian reformers have 140,000,000 people to handle. However, we in Australia, with our small popula-

*Mr. West.*

tion, have laid down a grand foundation for the benefit of those who come after us. I think that our friends opposite should give more attention to Australian concerns, and let the Empire look after itself. The British nation has always been able to do so. Let us do something in Australia to build up a model and contented people. Of course, we cannot expect to utterly remove discontent. As a matter of fact, discontent is the breeding-ground of progress. If we became merely a mutual-admiration society, our fall will be greater than that of Rome. I, for example, am discontented; I am particularly discontented with what is going on here to-day. I do not think that, with the present Government in power, we can make the progress we should be making. The only foundation for a pure Democracy throughout the world is for the industrial sections of the various races to better understand one another and join together in that brotherhood of friendship which alone will insure the stoppage of all wars.

**Mr. BRENNAN** (Batman) [5.42].—  
Mr. Deputy Speaker—

**Mr. MATHEWS.**—I draw attention to the state of the House. [*Quorum formed.*]

**Mr. BRENNAN.**—When the war-makers of this Chamber have exhausted themselves on the question of peace, perhaps it is not unbecoming that the peace-maker should contribute a few words to this debate. I have listened to one or two addresses on this motion, notably one by the honorable member for Koo-yong (Sir Robert Best). At one stage, I ventured to profess my complete agreement with the honorable member. That fact may seem to require some explanation; at all events, I must tender something by way of modification. The honorable member stated that there was a radical difference in the present position of the Dominions in their relationship to the British Empire as compared with what it was in pre-war time. I join issue with the honorable member on that point. There is technically and legally, at all events, no difference whatever in the position occupied by Australia to-day from that which was occupied by her before the war, as part and parcel of the British Empire. There is no difference from the point of view of the international lawyer,



or from any other legal point of view. It may be that, as a result of the war, or for other reasons that may appear sufficiently good to those guiding the destinies of the British Empire in London, that certain formal acts of politeness have been extended to Australia and the other Dominions which were not extended to them previously; but our position remains exactly the same. I was very much interested to hear the honorable member for Cowper (Dr. Earle Page) on the question of our representation at the Washington Conference. Our representation at that Conference was a representation of the British Empire as a single entity. I do not pretend to know whether the position of Canada was different or not, but I do know that Australia could not have been represented at the Washington Conference as Australia; it could only be represented there as part of a delegation, as the Prime Minister himself admitted to-day, sent by the Imperial Government to represent His Majesty the King. I insist upon that, not because I am a great Imperialist—honorable members will accept my assurance that I am not—not because I am a great believer in the spirit of Imperialism, as I understand it, because I am not; but because I would like honorable members to understand that they cannot have it both ways. If they are so deeply content, so quietly docile in their satisfaction, with the Imperial relationship—and I express no discontent with it at this stage—they must also pay the price of Imperial solidarity; they must learn to realize that the Empire, if it is to be a coherent Empire, requires the loyalty of its parts to the centre, and that when it comes to a matter of international relationship it can speak with only one voice. We may send any number of persons, but they represent a single entity, namely the British Empire. That is the point which illustrates the one limitation upon Australia's absolute independence. For all practical purposes Australia is a self-governing Dominion; she controls her own destinies; not quite absolutely, but nearly absolutely; and, so far as her own affairs are concerned, she is her own mistress. But when it comes to matters of international relationship, she does not control her own destinies; she pays the price of her Imperial connexion, and is bound to defer to the head of the Empire, namely,

the Imperial Parliament, which, in the last resort, controls our international operations. The Prime Minister fondly boasts that Australia is a nation, and one of a family of nations or Commonwealth of nations; but he cannot, however accomplished he may be, speak with two voices; he cannot insist on our entire subservience to Great Britain on the one hand, and on our absolute independence on the other. If he is wedded so deeply to the Imperial connexion he may have it, but it involves that element of subordination to which I have referred, and which is inseparable from the Imperial connexion. I say this so that we may take the scales off our eyes, and realize the position for what it is. We may spread our wings in the confident hope and belief that we are a nation equal with the other nations of the world, yet we must admit that we are bound with the Imperial tie as a subordinate part of the Empire. Therefore, when the honorable member talks of the consummate skill with which the British Government handled the question of Australia's representation at the Conference, I merely point out that there was no need for the exercise of consummate or any skill. There was no need for anything but the polite concession that Australia's representative might be one of the Imperial Delegation to proceed to the Conference. It was in that relationship that Senator Pearce, of whom I shall have something to say later, proceeded to Washington as Australia's representative. There is, therefore, that one limitation—and that an important one, from the international point of view—upon Australia's absolute independence. It is a well-defined limitation, which may come to have very grave importance in time of war. In time of peace it matters very little, because we are not much concerned with international politics; but, in time of war, our right to dictate our own foreign policy becomes a consideration of vital interest. When the diplomats on the other side of the water have decided that war is to be fought, it becomes important for us to know whether we are to be given the reasons and causes therefore, and to have an opportunity of examining them, or whether we are, as merely a portion of the Empire, to run up the flag of battle, so soon as war has been declared for us by the diplomatic authorities advising Downing-street.

The position of Australia, as part of the Empire, is different from that proposed to be enjoyed by Ireland under what is known as the Irish Free State. In that Treaty—if it is ever given full effect—there is a recognition of Ireland as something more than part of the Empire in the sense that a Dominion is a part. She is recognised as a State having the power to make Treaties; and the very fact of her becoming signatory to a Treaty recognises her national rights. This vital point was insisted upon by Ireland's representatives in conference, and was conceded by the British Prime Minister and the other delegates of Great Britain, namely, that her essential right to nationhood must be recognised. In the Treaty that right has been recognised; and, therefore, though Ireland remains associated with the British Empire, it is as a Free State capable of making Treaties, and having an independent nationhood, and, therefore, to that extent—I repeat—different from and superior to, the Dominions.

I was pleased to welcome to-day new converts to the cult of peace. My only regret, and it is deep, is that they should have come so late, after the wreck and ravage of war, when all the destruction has been achieved, and so many lives have been lost and homes desolated rather than that they should have spoken courageously when they might have served some immensely greater purpose. The honorable member for Kooyong (Sir Robert Best) referred this afternoon to the tremendous influence which can be exerted upon public opinion by a round-table conference; to the beautiful work that can be done, not perhaps by observing the strict letter of the law, but by formulating and moulding a healthy public opinion towards peaceful relationships between the nations. It was when rivers of blood were flowing, and when our soldiery were giving their lives on the battlefields of Europe; when strong men were wanted to stem the fearful tide of carnage; and when some of us spoke fearfully, it may be, and hesitatingly, perhaps, of a round-table conference the honorable member was silent. Or, if he was not entirely silent, he merely spoke in order that he might cover us with ignominy and contempt.

Mr. BELL.—Some people speak at the wrong time.

*Mr. Brennan.*

Mr. BRENNAN.—They do, and honorable members now are speaking at the wrong time, when the mischief has been done, when nearly 60,000 of our priceless manhood have been slaughtered on the battlefields, when some 400,000 have been wounded, maimed and crushed in this dreadful work of carnage over four bloody years. But during that time they did not have the courage to speak. They speak to-day, but, truly, at the wrong time.

Mr. MAXWELL.—Does the honorable member realize that it is oratory such as his that excites feelings which inevitably issue in war?

Mr. BRENNAN.—I do not know precisely what the honorable member means; but this I know—and, as I go along, perhaps, I shall be able to answer his question—that when I came into the Labour party as a youth—and I never belonged to another, and I hope that I never shall—I was attracted by some of its fundamental principles. It had, written across its charter, the principle of the brotherhood of man. It expressed the sentiment, where all might read it, of the principle of internationalism; as Scotland's poet has put it, they said "a man's a man for a' that," he was not to be judged by mere geographical situation, but he was to be entitled to realize the just claims of manhood wherever he might live and work out his destiny. I was attracted by Labour's policy of persistent opposition to what was known as militarism. I was attracted to it because it set its face against those gilded aristocrats who, in the home of diplomacy, behind closed doors, brought about the destruction of millions of their fellow men for causes not disclosed and with objects undeclared. This was Labour's view upon the question of war.

Mr. MAXWELL.—"The last man and the last shilling!"

Mr. BRENNAN.—Since the iniquity of the Boer war there had been no great war affecting this country, or the Empire. Some fourteen or fifteen years had passed and we were living in times of peace. During that period the leaders of my own party and some honorable members opposite preached these doctrines, and thriving upon them enjoyed place and pay. Then there came the testing time of war. But



how many of them were found wanting! I remember the Right Honorable Sir Joseph Cook, as Leader of the Opposition in that fateful year, 1915, rising in his place where I am now standing at the table, and addressing the then Leader of the Labour party, my own leader, the Right Honorable Andrew Fisher—honest Andrew Fisher. I do not pretend to recall precise words, but the Leader of the Opposition asked the Prime Minister what he proposed to do in regard to the utterances of the honorable member for Batman, that honorable member having spoken under the auspices of the Peace Alliance to his own people, in his own electorate, the previous night. I have great respect for Andrew Fisher, I am bound to say, but the historical aspect of the case requires me to remark that he rose in his place, looking like a churchwarden at the death-bed of a rich relation from whom he was expecting a handsome legacy, and deplored my utterances in connexion with that meeting under the auspices of the Peace Alliance. He was sorry I had so spoken because, apparently, he did not realize what Labour ideals and principles were in this regard; but, on the contrary, falling into line with the conventional standards of the militarists in this Parliament, he placed on record a phrase which, I regret to say, did immeasurable harm to our country while it did not inconvenience him in the least, namely—"The last man and the last shilling." We who spoke as I spoke at that meeting in the Fitzroy Town Hall, spoke, as the honorable member for Darwin (Mr. Bell) has just inferred, "out of our turn." We spoke in time of war in order to bring about peace. These distinguished gentlemen who have spoken to-day, speak in time of peace in order that we may have peace until the next war.

Sir GRANVILLE RYRIE.—And where will you be again?

Mr. BRENNAN.—And then the gallant gentleman who has just interjected will resume his uniform declaring blatantly that the Empire must be served. He will cry "Call out the dogs of war. Down with Germany"—if it is Germany—"and to hell with France"—if it should be France, or whatever nation and people

it may be. "Let us not examine the causes. We live by fighting; and, especially, we live by the fighting of the masses who fight and die without knowing the reasons for which they fight." The war drew on its dreadful tragic course.

Mr. LISTER.—You escaped it!

Mr. BRENNAN.—I escaped it. If the honorable member will have it, I fought at a safe distance for peace, while my political opponents on the other side—and they are many—fought from an equally safe strategic point for war; that is the difference between us. It was to be a war for right against might, but in its essentials this war did not differ from any other. All honour to the men who fought and died; they realized a great purpose as they saw it, and served it well. Neither here nor elsewhere have I attempted or desired to besmirch their name, or their high standard of honour and achievement; but when one speaks in this connexion of right and wrong, I say that those who controlled operations in this war had little, if any, conception of right against might—their appeals have always been in the last resort to force, irrespective of right. When the Germans lied about the causes and the inspirations of the war, our responsible people were lying in the same way about it. When the Germans were lying about the course of the war, about the success or non-success of the war, our Intelligence Department lied with the same freedom of spirit and originality. If those who, on the other side of the world, were endeavouring to persuade men to fight and destroy each other, set the standard of truth and morality at a lower and baser level, those who controlled our armies adopted exactly the same lower standard of morality, and exposed men to the same debasing conditions and encouraged them in the same vices. Wherever war is fought it is fought on the same basis of fraud, deception, and debased morality.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—This is an extraordinary speech!

Mr. BRENNAN.—The honorable member for Wakefield (Mr. Richard Foster) misjudges me—he judges me by his own standard. What I said during the war I am saying to-day after the war. I did not swing with the side as the

honorable member did on the question of the Federal Capital. At all events, I claim for myself the virtue of consistency.

Then we come to the Treaty of Versailles. Turn to men who fought in the war, or men like Sir Philip Gibbs, who reported it, and ask what of this Treaty? Ask these men, whose opinions we pretend to respect, if this was not a base betrayal of the vital principles for which we were supposed to be fighting. They answer with one voice that it was. It was not the vindication of right against might, but it was in the fullest measure the apotheosis of might against right. Ask them if there was peace in the unspeakable wrong of the blockade. It is well we should examine our conscience and know the truth—how we made war on women and children, the sick and the crippled, doing outrage to the principles for which the war was said to be fought.

Mr. GREENE.—Will you say a word or two about the submarine campaign?

Mr. BRENNAN.—Another vile attribute of the war! The Minister invites me to refer to the submarine campaign. It may have been observed that the Washington Conference has not been able to secure any mitigation of this horror, and if I refer to the wrongs of which we were an instrument, rather than the outrages committed by the enemy, it is because we can, and should, control ourselves if we cannot control others. The Prime Minister says that the conditions under which the submarine may be used have been greatly mitigated, and my Leader (Mr. Charlton) has pointed out that that is so if the Treaty be observed. But will this present Treaty be observed by persons who have been described as "unconscionable Huns"? What moral restraint or restrictions can you put on persons such as the Germans were described to be when it was considered good politics and good policy to make men and women hate their fellow men? What is the good of paper restrictions under the circumstances? My honorable friends opposite claim that they won the war, but I modestly divest myself of any credit on that score. The honorable member for Parkes (Mr. Marr) "spreads" himself occasionally with the conviction that he won the war, but whether he won it by sending wireless messages to his friends in London, Paris,

or Sydney, I cannot say. He interjects, and I can only reply when he calls attention to himself; otherwise he would not be noticeable. Who really did win the war; who is the victor or the vanquished, after all? I read recently the following in the *Herald*:—

#### NEVER AGAIN!

ANTI-WAR DEMONSTRATION IN ENGLAND.

(Reuter.)

London, July 27.

Uniform with similar demonstrations on the Continent and in America and the Dominions, a huge pacifist demonstration was held in London this afternoon.

Earlier in the day aeroplanes utilized smoke for writing on the sky "No more war."

One of the five processions marched past the Cenotaph in Whitehall carrying a banner inscribed: "Salutation to the fallen. Never again!" Floral tributes were distributed.

Thousands of people listened to speeches in Hyde Park.

Similar demonstrations are taking place in all parts of the Continent, and they are not made by pacifists like myself. These demonstrations are by military men, ex-soldiers and fighting men. These are the men who at least have learned to fly the aeroplane. Why should they shout out "Never again!"? Because they see the futility of it all. They see they have not realized, and cannot realize, the ideals for which they were sent to fight. They know that the causes for which they fought were not fairly or candidly stated. They see that, had we had a courageous facing of the real issues by men who were not afraid to speak of peace, peace with honour and without slaughter might have been achieved. The honorable member for Cowper (Dr. Earle Page)—and no better, sounder, or more patriotic Imperialist has spoken in the House—says to-day that had there been, shortly before war was declared, a round-table conference in London to examine the real disturbing causes that were then threatening the world, it is more than possible that war could have been averted. Had we dared to say that during the war we should have run serious risks of prosecution and imprisonment. France is the most dissatisfied nation to-day, and the most stricken nation. She has suffered most, and she is the least satisfied, for the simple reason that she is asking her Allies in the war to make good the promises and pledges they made when waging the war—promises and



pledges which France's Allies have no intention of honouring. They know well that Germany will never make the reparation—never pay the money that is a charge to her. Did we not declare that we would never trade again with Germany? Did we not positively promise the people that we would bring the Kaiser to trial, hang him, and, if possible, draw and quarter him? To-day, German ships are in Australian waters, and German goods are coming into Australia. The capitalists are more concerned in pocketing the profits out of German goods than they are in making good the promises they gave the people during the war.

Mr. SCULLIN.—And the Kaiser is still alive!

Mr. BRENNAN.—He is still alive; and out of a book of his own experiences that he has written, he is making, I have read, the equivalent of £50,000. No one any longer talks of bringing the Kaiser to trial. In the speech to which I have already referred, I ventured to predict that the time was not very far distant when, if the Kaiser should come through Port Phillip Heads, the Lord Mayor, and the civic authorities, would be falling over themselves to give him a welcome.

Mr. BELL.—And the honorable member would be ahead of all of them—he would be the first to give him welcome.

Mr. BRENNAN.—The honorable member knows perfectly well that I am no friend of the Kaiser. I might go a little further, and tell the honorable member that I viewed with perfect complacency the toppling over of quite a number of Royal dynasties at the time.

Mr. MARR.—The honorable member would delight in the toppling over of the British Royal dynasty.

Mr. BRENNAN.—And I even viewed with pleasure the overthrow of the Czar, who was our chosen and highly-respected Ally in the early stages of the war. As soon as he was overthrown, the Prime Minister, from his place in this House, said, "I am inclined to think that, with the overthrow of the Czar, we shall have a rather more determined effort by Russia on behalf of the Allies in the war." He had not even a word of commiseration for his unhappy Ally the Czar, who had met such a tragic fate. Needless to say, his prophecy as to the support which Russia

would give the Allies after that event was not fulfilled.

I was speaking, when interrupted, of the arrival of German ships in Australian waters, and was referring to the joyous welcome which the Kaiser would have from his friends on the other side of the House if he should come here at any time. Here is a quotation from last Monday's issue of the *Herald*—

That British ship-owners are prepared to meet the German owners on a pre-war basis, is borne out by the fact that both the Teutonic shipping lines mentioned were admitted to the Conference of Australian ship-owners trading overseas as soon as they made application for re-admission. Thus their re-entry will not alter freight or passenger rates, as all the firms of the Conference charge similar rates.

It will be observed that, not only have these Teutons been admitted to the Conference of ship-owners, but that there has been arrived at between them a perfectly friendly understanding that there shall be no reduction in passenger rates or freights. Thus, we see that the arrangement by which freights and fares are kept up is not only one between British or Allied capitalists, but is an arrangement into which the Teutonic capitalist is also welcomed.

I propose now to refer to Senator Pearce, his mission to Washington, and his qualifications for that mission. Senator Pearce was, for many years, Minister for Defence, and he is still a Minister of the Crown. He was the chosen representative and proceeded to Washington. He was chosen at the last moment, and, speaking in this House on the occasion of his choice, although my leader and others of my party had been entirely favorable to Australia being represented, so far as we could be represented, at that Conference, I ventured to say that, with the exception of the Prime Minister himself, no worse choice could have been made than that of the then Minister for Defence.

Mr. POYNTON.—There is some consolation in this change of front on the part of the honorable member. At one time it was with him a case of "Gott strafe Hughes." Now it is a case of "Gott strafe Pearce."

Mr. BRENNAN.—The honorable member speaks in a tongue which I do not understand.

Mr. POYNTON.—The honorable member does not want to understand me.

Mr. BRENNAN.—I should like to be familiar with German, but my education in that regard, I am sorry to say, has been neglected, and consequently, I am unable to acquaint myself first-hand with the excellent literature of the German people. On the occasion in question, I did not wish, as the honorable member suggests, to be offensive to the Prime Minister or Senator Pearce. I merely employed the language of description, and I registered what I thought was an honest judgment. I believed Senator Pearce to be totally unfitted, from every point of view, for a mission of that kind, and I was of the opinion that he had proved his unfitness during the war. He was for years a member of the Labour party. He was one of its trusted leaders, and as such, he not only adopted but eloquently advocated those views about the brotherhood of man—internationalism—and the claims of manhood and humanity the world over, to which I have already alluded. He was a man who, as I have said of others, rose to place and pay by the advocacy of views of that kind.

*Sitting suspended from 6.30 to 8 p.m.*

Mr. GABB.—I call attention to the state of the House. [*Quorum formed.*]

Mr. BRENNAN.—To put this matter in proper sequence, the circumstances under which the Washington Conference was convened must be remembered. The right honorable the Leader of the House went to England to represent, or, in my view, to misrepresent, Australia at the Imperial Conference, and before he left these shores he made a very determined and successful effort to induce this House to give him an instruction to support the renewal of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. I was not favorable to the renewal of that Alliance. I spoke upon the proposal, and whilst I did not very strongly condemn the renewal, I pointed out that it was out of harmony with the League of Nations, and that it meant a policy of mutual agreement for the time being between two Powers, which was likely to provoke the antagonism of other Powers, and possibly in that way involve us in war, because we were pledged to support Japan, by force of arms if need be, in certain defined circumstances. The Prime Minister went to England. He was prepared to advocate the renewal of the

Treaty, when the united legal acumen of the British Empire suddenly discovered that the Treaty would not come to an end at the time at which it was believed hitherto it would terminate; but, unless denounced, would automatically continue. At the same time, an invitation came from Washington to the British Government to send representatives to a Disarmament Conference. This spiked the guns of the Australian Prime Minister, and, trouble brewing in his own political house in Australia, he hastened back to keep up the tottering citadel of his almost paralytic Government. Honorable members will remember how unkindly the honorable member for Balaclava (Mr. Watt) referred to the circumstances of the Prime Minister's return to these shores and his stage-managed welcome by soldiers. We need not go further into that subject. But shortly afterwards, the Leader<sup>o</sup> of the Opposition became active in an endeavour to secure representation for this country at Washington. It was quite clear that the Prime Minister, having failed in his mission abroad, and having been sent Home in a somewhat dejected frame of mind, lost interest in the Washington Conference, and we have to thank honorable members—on this side of the House in particular—for their activity in seeking to have honest representation of Australia at Washington. Senator Pearce was chosen as the Australian delegate. I said then that no worse choice but one could have been made, and that one was the Prime Minister. In the past, Senator Pearce had been a vigorous anti-militarist. During the Boer war, he got himself disliked, like many other just men in time of war, by sternly declaring that in no circumstances would he be a party to any Australian proceeding to join the Forces in war against the Boers. For once he was right; but he became very unpopular in being right. He practised anti-militarism for the next thirteen or fourteen years, until the outbreak of the great European war, and then, having risen to place and pay on the principles of anti-militarism, without a moment's hesitation, he heard the bugle call of war, and proceeded to offer incense at the altar of Moloch. No more docile follower of the militarist class in this country has ever been seen; no man turned more readily on the principles which made



him than the gentleman whom the Government determined to send to Washington to talk peace. No man did more to destroy the basic principles of peace than Senator Pearce, our chosen emissary of peace. He laid aside for the time being Karl Marx; he put out of his mind Emerson, and every one of those authorities whom he had quoted in a thousand speeches in defence of his principles of anti-militarism, and he adopted as readily Nietzsche, Treitschke, Roosevelt, Rudyard Kipling, and every blatant militarist he could find to justify his rapid and complete change of front. He made a hundred speeches, every one of which did violence to a thousand other speeches which, during the time of peace, he had traded upon. During the time he was Minister for Defence, he imprisoned men without trial, after preaching for over a decade that the principles of *Magna Charta* must be respected, and that every man charged with an offence was entitled to trial by jury of his countrymen. Just as often as he preached that principle, as often, yea, and a thousand times more often, he made men suffer injustice in this country without trial and without hearing, and merely because of their nationality, merely because, in some sense, they were foreign born. He penalized men for their nationality whether they were aliens or not; he did violence and injustice to members of the Italian community in our midst, and made himself a party to a faked communication, which was alleged to have come to the Commonwealth Government from the Italian Government, but which never did come, and which was a pure figment of the imagination. He used that as the instrument for penalizing and tyrannizing over Italians who came to these shores believing that here they would enjoy the protection of the British flag.

Mr. GREENE.—The honorable member has no justification for making that statement.

Mr. BRENNAN.—The answer to the Minister is that I have already, from my place in this House, quoted documents which prove my case, and which never have been answered, and cannot be answered.

Mr. ROBERT COOK.—And still the people return Senator Pearce to Parliament.

Mr. BRENNAN.—They still return the honorable member for Indi, which is even more incredible. Then we come to this grim jest of sending Senator Pearce to Washington—this masterpiece of irony in sending such a man to talk peace on the other side of the world. He had risen on the wreckage of his party to the position he held, and having deserted them, boasted that they had blown out their brains. He was sent to Washington, and the Prime Minister has told us that there he covered himself and the country which he represented with distinction. The right honorable gentleman may have it that way if he pleases, but I thought it my duty to record the views of myself and those for whom I speak in the pages of *Hansard* before this question is finally settled and our decision goes before the world. The Conference has been held, and it is said to have been successful. No Peace Conference can be successful, no Disarmament Conference can have any measure of success worth while, unless it is carried out by men who have the heart and conscience for peace, and who mean peace. The mere arbitrary reduction of armaments gets us no nearer to peace. The mere fact that one Power, with eyes half closed and watching closely its adversaries, expresses its willingness to do away with one battle-ship if a friendly neighbouring Power will do away with one of its battle-ships, or the fact that one Power is willing to demobilize so many soldiers if another Power will do likewise, brings us no nearer peace. But when it is determined to destroy the battle-ship *Australia* and so many other huge engines of destruction, which in taxation have been built by the blood and tears of suffering people, we have evidence that by that means the signatories to the Treaty have proved to demonstration the folly of the people in allowing their so-called leaders to lead them into war. Constructing ships which they are to destroy! Building huge armaments which now in a spirit of doubtful good-will they have determined shall be no more! Asseverating and assuring each other that they are bent on the path of pacifism at last! It does not seem to occur to them that the wisdom of those who said, "Do not build these things" was far greater than the wisdom of those who say, "Now we have got them we shall destroy them." We sometimes hear the Labour party charged

with advocating useless or unprofitable works for the labouring classes. Could there be a greater travesty than this, of spending upon armaments hundreds of millions of pounds, which represents millions of pounds of taxation upon the suffering people, and then telling the world that, by reason of the good-will which has been created after the war, the nations have determined to scrap these things and to march forward together as brothers on the road of perpetual peace? I only hope that the Conference will have some fruitful and useful results, but I do not hope for peace through the media of men like the right honorable the Prime Minister, who believe in war, and who say that war is the natural human animal way of settling international differences. I do not hope for peace through the weak associates of the military caste, such as the gentleman who represented us at Washington. My only hope for peace is in the hearts of the people who have suffered much, and because they have suffered much and have been deluded and misled, and are to-day bearing a burden of taxation which the folly of others has placed upon them, I trust that the advice they are getting now from the anti-militarists they will follow; and that as those soldiers of Great Britain and the Continent said, "Never again!" in truth it will be "Never again," so that when next the slogan of war is sent up by capitalists, militarists, and diplomatists the answer will be "Never again! You have made the war; now go on with the fight. In the past you have done the talking, and we have done all the paying; you have gathered all the profits and dividends, now do the fighting. As for us, 'Never again!'"

**Mr. FOWLER** (Perth) [8.16].—It is almost hardly worth while discussing a motion of this kind, because it will not matter one brass farthing whether Australia passes the motion or not. It is part of our newly-found and, in some quarters, much appreciated idea of nationhood, in which, for the sake of a little bit of theatricality, Australia has arrived at a position in which she cannot, even if she would, undertake the responsibilities which nationhood implies. I have regarded the Washington Conference as a great landmark in the history of civilization. I have followed the course of it with very great interest, and I agree

that it is something upon which Australia should concentrate her attention, not so much as regards what has been done, but as regards the possibilities for the future. After all is said and done, there is not a great deal in the actual results achieved; but the Conference itself indicates possibilities to mankind of which Australia in particular should be fully seised. If we are to depend upon the results achieved for our protection as a community we are leaning on a very weak reed. The Conference has, undoubtedly, been a very favorable get-out for our Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes), who has for many years, in season and out of season, suggested that the Commonwealth is in great danger from Japan. He would have been very hardly put to, indeed, in a very short space of time had it not been for the holding of this Conference. He would have had to change his attitude towards Japan, because, during all these years that country has been nothing but a loyal and whole-hearted supporter of the alliance into which she had entered with Great Britain. The Washington Conference, therefore, came at a very opportune time to save the Prime Minister of Australia from a rather awkward situation. We are given to understand that we can now reduce our expenditure on naval and military matters very considerably, because, by the Conference, Australia has been rendered absolutely safe. But that is far from being the case. If there was danger to Australia from the direction indicated before the Conference, it has been more accentuated since, because Great Britain has now surrendered her sovereignty of the seas, and if Australia were menaced by another nation it would be a matter of great difficulty, if not absolute impossibility, for the Mother Country in the existing circumstances to come to our aid. But I have endeavoured to show here and elsewhere that our apprehensions as regards danger from a particular quarter had no foundation whatsoever. In all these years when we were piling up preparations against Germany it was absolute nonsense to think that they might be necessary against any other Power, and now that the menace of Germany has disappeared, Australia can with every confidence in the future, immediate and distant, reduce her expenditure on armaments, and devote herself to that particular form of defence which, above all



others, is the most essential to our existence, and that is the introduction of immigrants from our own Homeland.

The Washington Conference suggests great possibilities in a direction I was glad to see indicated by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Charlton) this afternoon. It opens up possibilities for the League of Nations, and in that particular regard should remain for Australia a most significant landmark, because if there is any country on the face of the earth which ought to develop and encourage the League of Nations' ideals it should be Australia. Yet here we are to-day with a few enthusiasts doing their best at a few points throughout our vast continent to interest Australia in this ideal, while our Government, and especially the head of the Government, by indifference and neglect, prevent the people of the Commonwealth from seizing upon the meaning and significance of this great world-wide movement. It was indicative of the attitude of the Prime Minister that to the last Conference of the League he should send a clerk from an office. It was only because of the indignation created by that unfortunate nomination that we were able to see, I think with satisfaction to all, the honorable member for Flinders (Mr. Bruce) subsequently designated to accompany the gentleman chosen by the Prime Minister in the first instance. The work which the honorable member for Flinders did was something with which Australia had every right to be satisfied. I hope that this country will allow nothing to stand in the way of devoting its energies and interests to the development of the League of Nations. We are told that it costs a good deal of money. It does, but any movement of that kind breaking new ground must of necessity lead to the expenditure of money.

Mr. CHARLTON.—It is money well spent.

Mr. FOWLER.—It is. I disagree with the Leader of the Opposition when he suggests that the League of Nations is merely a skeleton. It is something which is clothed with flesh and is pulsating with warm blood. It has done a great deal in the face of very serious difficulties and the indifference of politicians of a certain kind, who see in the

quiet, earnest work carried out by the League an end to all their theatricalities and their diplomatic twistings which have been the cause of so much bloodshed in the past.

Mr. CHARLTON.—What I said was that I wished all public men would display an interest in the League of Nations in order to galvanize it into life.

Mr. FOWLER. — Quite so, but the League of Nations has life in it already. It has been the means of repatriating hundreds of thousands of poor prisoners of war, returning them to their homes. It has taken upon itself the settlement of several very serious international disputes. It gave a decision upon the Aland Islands question as between Finland and Sweden. The Silesian question has to be referred to the League of Nations after the statesmen of Europe had wrangled over it for several months without reaching an understanding. In many ways the League has applied itself to excellent work for the peace of the world, and its latest development, the creation of an international court of justice, will strengthen its efforts in this direction to a greater degree than anything else yet accomplished. It is unfortunate that this great movement has not at the present time, technically at any rate, the support of the people of the United States of America. The League of Nations was turned down by the Parliament of the United States when President Wilson came back with it from Paris as one of his pet ideas, but not because of any particular defects in the system or because of the ideal itself. It was turned down simply because it suited the dominant political party in the United States Parliament to treat it accordingly. However, there is in the United States of America a fine body of public opinion which was strong even when the League of Nations was thrown out of doors by the Parliament, and which has been growing and developing ever since. In fact, it may be claimed that it to a large extent dominates the politics of both political parties in America. It was largely due to the existence of that feeling that the idea of the Washington Conference was formulated by President Harding and his advisers. Having turned down the League of Nations,

America felt that it should give something by way of substitute or something equally good, and although, as I say, there is nothing technically being done on behalf of the League of Nations by the people of the United States, still, there is a very strong organization in existence which is working for the same object which the League of Nations has in view, and which sooner or later must come into touch with the European movement of the same kind. Early in the afternoon, when the Leader of the Opposition was speaking, I interjected that this movement was essentially one for the women of the world. I want to emphasize that remark. If ever there was a movement which should have the enthusiastic support of the women of the world, it is one which makes for the ending of warfare. If the women of the world would only take it up there would be no doubt whatever as to the result. Warfare would become impossible, and we would have to get down to the ordinary civilized method of settling international disputes by courts of law or by arbitration. I hope that the Government will arise to the necessity for appointing a woman from Australia to attend the next Conference of the League of Nations. We have given women the vote, we have accorded them equality in political matters generally, and I think it would be a significant act on the part of the Government, and one which would be fairly indicative of Australia's attitude in many respects, if a woman were chosen as one of the delegates to the forthcoming Conference of the League of Nations. Such a woman can be found in Australia, and I trust, therefore, that when the nominations are made known the name of a representative woman will be seen upon the list. I would rather see a woman selected who is altogether outside of the party sphere of activities.

Mr. HIGGS.—It would not be a bad idea to send Mrs. Glencross.

Mr. FOWLER.—Unlike the honorable member, I have not the temerity to suggest the name of any one lady for nomination.

In conclusion, I earnestly express the hope that we shall not lose sight of the larger issues which are at stake in connexion with the ratification of these Treaties.

Mr. PROWSE (Swan) [8.31].—I was one of those who supported the appointment of a delegate to the Washington Conference; and I feel, at this concluding stage, that we have nothing to regret in our selection. Australia, in sending her Minister for Defence did the proper thing. I was unable to understand or appreciate the speech of the honorable member for Batman (Mr. Brennan). The League of Nations and the Washington Conference surely tend to maintain peaceful conditions throughout the world. Why should these noble movements be criticised and their objectives impugned? Why should a nation such as ours be blamed for the part we played in the Great War? The honorable member for Batman endeavoured to insinuate sinister designs. How can any such criticism be offered to the entrance of the British Empire into the war? The unpreparedness of the Mother Country was even more markedly manifest than that of this Dominion. That fact alone would demonstrate to any unbiased mind that Great Britain was not looking for war when hostilities broke out in 1914. May I ask when does the honorable member for Batman think the time is ripe for war? I wonder just when he would begin to fight, and under what conditions. Would he fight for any nation other than the British Empire? He made it clear that he was in no sense an Imperialist. He made it rather emphatically clear, indeed, that he was against the Empire which shelters him and us all. The honorable member referred to Ireland as being a unit in the Empire, but one which enjoys a greater liberty and more extended powers than are possessed by any of the other units of the Empire. Would it not be better for the honorable member to betake himself to Ireland with his peaceful speeches and remain there, where there is still fighting to be done on one side or another, despite the fact that the Irish people, at the ballot-box, have spoken for peace in no uncertain voice. It would appear, by the way, that the gentleman with whose ideals the honorable member for Batman agrees and who is maintaining conditions of warfare in Ireland, must be a capitalist. For the honorable member for Batman infers that all war comes from the capitalistic sentiment. Is Mr. De Valera a capitalist, fighting, as he



is, against the avowed wish and will of the people of that freest of all the units in the British Empire? When the honorable member makes speeches such as he has uttered to-day, in a peace-loving community, his purpose certainly cannot be to strengthen our Empire. If we are bound by silken cords to the Mother Country, is that not to our advantage? Has it not been to his personal advantage to enjoy the protection and liberty permitted by the very fact of our attachment by those silken cords? Is it because Ireland is less closely bound by such ties that her people are fighting each other to-day? The least one can say is that the honorable member for Batman is but lightly devoted to his country, and the Empire of which it is a part.

The honorable member reflected upon the delegate sent by Australia to the Washington Conference, because, during the war, he had stoutly wielded the cudgels of the Empire in Australia's behalf. Does the fact that our delegate was Australia's Minister for Defence imply that he must have been bloodthirsty, always seeking war rather than means for keeping the peace? In civil life, the man who can fight the best looks for it the least. It was only right and proper that the Commonwealth's Minister for Defence should have been directed to sit at the table at Washington. Who, better than he, could understand the peaceful ideals of this country?

As to the motives which kept America out of the League of Nations, and caused her to convene the Washington Conference, I believe that America will yet fall into line in fullest sympathy with the units of the League, and will become an active and leading member of that great body. And I trust that in these gatherings of the world's representative men kindly humanitarian feelings will eventually and then always prevail.

**Mr. ANSTEY** (Bourke) [8.38].—I cannot refrain from following the honorable member who has just resumed his seat. And I cannot help admitting that while he was addressing the House, I was wondering in what particular battles he had fought. I would like to ask him whose, and how much blood, he has shed, what victories he has won, what armies he has led. Since the honorable member expressed himself such a patriot, I presume that he has done as much for the

Empire as the majority of honorable members.

**Mr. PROWSE**.—I have not "yapped" against it, anyhow.

**Mr. ANSTEY**.—Quite true!

**Mr. PARKER MOLONEY**.—He has done the "sooling on."

**Mr. ANSTEY**.—I would not even accuse the honorable member of that. He has neither "yapped" against the Empire, nor "sooled on" other men to fight for it. All that he did in the Great War was to make something out of it, while other honorable gentlemen were fighting and dying for the cause in which they believed. That was his contribution.

**Mr. PROWSE**.—That is false.

**Mr. ANSTEY**.—That is all the honorable member did.

**Mr. PROWSE**.—On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I ask if the honorable member for Bourke is in order in saying that the only thing I did in the war was to make money out of it.

**Mr. SPEAKER** (Hon. Sir Elliot Johnson).—The statement itself is not unparliamentary; it may not be a correct statement of fact; but if what the honorable member for Bourke said is offensive to the honorable member for Swan, I must ask him to withdraw it.

**Mr. PROWSE**.—My objection is that it is an untruth.

**Mr. ANSTEY**.—If the honorable member considers my remark offensive, I can only say, of course, that the truth is often offensive.

**Mr. PROWSE**.—I object that the honorable member's allegation is untrue.

**Mr. ANSTEY**.—Then, if it is untrue that the honorable member made money out of the Great War, I can only say that he has been unfortunate. He made nothing. The notice-paper for the day's proceedings points out that this is a debate upon the following motion—

That this House approves the Treaty between the United States of America, the British Empire, France, and Japan—

and George Foster Pearce, representing Australia, relating to various things. These various things include, apparently, the settlement of world peace upon certain bases and conditions, a settlement as to insular possessions and dominions in the Pacific, various naval settlements and others concerning noxious gases not to be found in Parliament, a settlement affecting China, and other things of that character. It is

quite proper and natural that an institution such as Parliament should spend its time in solemn deliberation upon questions like those. The peace of the world is all-important, and I can quite understand how that fact is appreciated by honorable gentlemen present. It matters not at what decisions the United States of America, Great Britain, France, Italy, and Japan may arrive. It matters not whether they have "signed up." Everything depends upon our ratification of these Treaties, with the assistance of George Foster Pearce. I turn up the report of our honoured representative; and I find that, just as the honorable member for Perth (Mr. Fowler) mentioned some days ago, there were men of all the nations gathered at the Conference, but that the most important personage was the gentleman whom we sent from Australia, the man who represented everything and everybody, and settled everything for everybody. In his formal statement our representative says that "I was selected"—whoever that first person singular may be—and that the Governor-General actually prayed His Majesty to issue to "me" letters patent, nominating and appointing "me" as "his" representative; and that the King, on the 24th day of October, 1921, by letters patent under the Great Seal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain, "and Ireland," issued to "me" a full power, appointing "me" Commissioner, Procurator, and Plenipotentiary in respect of the Commonwealth of Australia. This "me" would appear to be the aforementioned person of the name of George Foster Pearce. It is he upon whose decisions have rested the fate of Empires. It would appear that the said George Foster Pearce, to wit, the "me" afore indicated, left Australia on the 13th October, and that "we" arrived at Vancouver on the 5th November. It appears that there was some other person attached at this stage to the "me" of whom I have already said something. It seems, further, that "I" was granted landing facilities at Vancouver. Our delegate was permitted to land! When "I" arrived—I do not know that he could do anything else when he got there—"I," apparently, was met by a gentleman named Hughes—not William Morris Hughes—who accompanied "me" to Washington. "My" arrival at Washington synchronized with

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that of Mr. Balfour and Lord Lee. Apparently these three met, because the report states that on the day of "my" arrival at Washington, "we," that is, Lord Lee, Mr. Balfour, and "me," were welcomed, and "we"—Lord Lee, Mr. Balfour, and "me"—were conducted to our hotels by military escorts. Afterwards "we" visited the Capitol, where the body of an unknown American soldier was lying in state. Then there were prayers and the Conference, and we—that is, the people of Australia this time—now have to pay £8,500. It appears that there was a Quadruple Treaty relating to the Pacific, and, so we are informed, "I" propose to deal with that matter first, because, so we are told, of the importance attaching to "our" decision with regard to that question.

I now come to another matter. It appears that at the Conference there were a number of other gentlemen, including Cyril Player, who was representing one of the greatest newspapers in America, and whose reflections upon the different personages have some points of interest to "us." This is what he had to say—

Having viewed this Pearce from four sides and on numerous occasions; having stared at him from a few feet away, from the length of a room, and from the distance of a conference chamber; having viewed him, birdlike, from above, and wormlike, from below, I find it impossible to write anything about him, he is so commonplace. And yet, next to Mr. Hughes, he is supposed to be Australia's foremost statesman! . . . Politically he is a vacuum.

The decision of the Conference, apparently, was that there should be some alteration or amendment in connexion with naval armaments. But what possible effect can the opinion of this country have upon the destinies of the world? The honorable member for Perth (Mr. Fowler) in his peroration said that if only the women of the world would take an interest in this matter, what a difference it would make to the peace of the world. While I was listening to the honorable member I was reminded of an incident in my political career many years ago, when there was opposed to me a gentleman named Judkins, who at a meeting in Collingwood had a good deal to say about Wren's "Tote." When he asked, "Why do not the men in this country rise up and tear down this iniquity?" some poor fellow in the audience innocently inquired why Mr. Judkins himself did not lead them on to victory, and Mr. Judkins



replied that if he were only tall enough and strong enough physically he would like to lead them to tear down the iniquity that so offended him. And then he added, "But if we will not do it, I feel sure the women will!" Napoleon scaled the Alps and overran the plains of Lombardy, but evidently this Napoleon of morality has not "guts" enough to achieve fame, and so he falls back upon the womanhood of this country! If only the women would wake up they, at least, so he says, would secure the salvation of the world.

Mr. FOWLER.—The men, at all events, have made such a mess of things that the women could not make matters any worse.

Mr. ANSTEY.—The honorable member is quite right. But, unhappily, the troubles of the world are not solved upon sex relationships. If they were, the problems that confront mankind would be solved by our passions and pleasures, and not by our common sense. Australia is brought into this international difficulty only as a partner in the British Empire, and, therefore, our attitude towards the decisions of the Washington Conference will not affect the other nations one iota. If we were to reject this motion unanimously it would have no more effect upon the world than would a mere cork thrown into any of the ocean's currents.

Mr. PROWSE.—Still you want to cut the painter.

Mr. ANSTEY.—I was not saying anything about cutting the painter. I have heard all that since I was a boy. The honorable member's interjection reminds me that many years ago, when the British Fleet was in Queensland waters to block the black slave traffic, it was not the Leader of the Labour party in Australia, but the Kanaka employers of the sugar plantations of Queensland, that were talking of cutting the painter, and severing relations with the British Empire.

Mr. WATKINS.—And the present High Commissioner was once one of the strongest advocates of cutting the painter.

Mr. ANSTEY.—That is so. I am speaking to-night, not because I am particularly interested in this matter, but because the Government and everyone else are interested in the question, and it is a good way of wasting time. It does not matter much whether one speaker, more or less, contributes to this debate; it does not matter

if we speak for a week or a month, because, after all whatever we may do or say will not disturb in the least degree the other nations of the world. Of course, I do not expect to be reported in the daily press, but at all events I shall get my sentiments into *Hansard*, which will reach some of my constituents who, possibly, will admire my stupidity and perhaps applaud my contribution to the stupidity of this debate.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Order!

Mr. ANSTEY.—Mr. Speaker, I beg your pardon. You are always reminding me of the truth. In this Chamber there can be no lack of veracity, and no excuse for stupidity. Nothing but the truth can exist here. There never was anything in the Washington or any like Conference. Wars arise out of trade relationships. The Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) on one occasion said that "War was a purifying element"; that out of such struggles the nations emerge stronger and purified. Look at honorable members in this Chamber. The honorable member for Swan (Mr. Prowse) for one, has come purified out of the fires of war. A few pious resolutions of this character in this Parliament about the Washington Conference will not alter by one hair's breadth the trend of world affairs. As well try to persuade a conference of burglars to adopt a resolution not to rob people, because the moment they did so their occupation would be gone. This society, in which we live, is founded upon war, organized by capitalists for traffic, for conquest, for armament. This great George Foster Pearce says, "we," that is "I," proposed to limit submarines, that is to say, departing from big submarines to submarines of smaller size, in much the same manner that a decision may be come to as to whether a boxing contest shall be decided at 10 stone, or 9 stone, or 8 stone 7 pounds. The Conference, from beginning to end, was a farce, and I rose merely to make my contribution to a very stupid debate upon its deliberations. Wars will continue in spite of everything, even in spite of the utterances by our Prime Minister and the Prime Minister of Great Britain at church gatherings, or the comments upon those speeches by the *Age*, the *Argus*, and the press generally of Australia. These very men are

themselves pessimists, because by their intimate knowledge through life-long association with public affairs, and their deep study of economics, they know that these conferences are a mere sham, a fraud, and a delusion. They know the world, including Australia, is crumbling beneath a load of debt. They know the growing danger with regard to the decay of Germany, and they know the foundation of all the absurd talk and opinions that are passed out to the reading public. As Lloyd George said on one occasion, "You may shore up this capitalistic system a little longer so that it may not immediately fall upon you, but you cannot long sustain it." The growing indebtedness of the world, rival national interests, the control of the bond-holders, and the ever-growing demand for interest which is made upon the productions of rival countries render all resolutions of this character the mere expression of a pious hope on the part of nations, not one of which is prepared to face the real problems before it. The peace of the world cannot be insured by resolutions passed by the people of the United States of America, Germany, France, or Australia. It can be brought about only by means of a transformation which will lift from the world's production the enormous load of debt that the Great War has imposed upon it. I read to-day a newspaper statement to the effect that the total taxation of Australia just before the war amounted to £12,000,000 per annum. From the outbreak of war until 1918 this burden of taxation upon our country and its resources increased from £12,000,000 to £33,000,000 per annum, and between 1918-19 and 1922—a period not of war, but of peace—the taxation pressing on our country's productions increased from £32,000,000 to over £70,000,000. The same sort of thing is occurring not merely in Australia, but in practically every other country. That is the fundamental problem that we have to face. Because of it we find nations struggling for existence like so many rats in a pit. Despite solemn peace resolutions passed by them, they must inevitably fall upon each other and, so to speak, cut each other's throat in the struggle for existence. What are we offered as a means of ridding the world of this state of things? Merely a series of pious resolutions in which the

*Mr. Anstey.*

actual facts are covered up. Every country finds that it is confronted with enormous obligations. The only solution of this problem that we are offered is a reduction in the standard of living of the consuming public. When I see Australia confronted with a load of debt that is steadily piling up, year after year, I ask myself whether we should spend our time in discussing motions of this kind or whether we should not concentrate on matters that are of essential importance. If we are prepared to cut down the standard of existence in the hope that, by doing so, we may enable our country to fit itself to resist any possible aggression, why should we not be equally prepared to save our country from foreign aggression by reducing the amount which we are paying to our bond-holders? If we are prepared for this purpose to cut down the wages of the workers to the extent of 20 per cent., why should we not cut down the amount that we are paying our bond-holders? That question is not touched. We are content to believe that we can secure the peace of the world by the ratification of certain resolutions which really do not affect us. In the circumstances, I am not inclined to vote for or against this motion. Its discussion is a mere waste of time. It touches no particular issue. It does not affect the lives, the well-being, or the happiness of our people. It cannot secure the peace of the world. History teaches us that when a nation affected by a Treaty is powerful enough to spurn it, it does so, and that when a country is strong enough to apply the terms of a Treaty in a way that is odious to another party to it, it will do so. A Treaty is usually made between the conqueror and the conquered, and when the conquered considers itself strong enough to put an end to that Treaty it at once ignores it. And so all Treaties, after all, are mere scraps of paper. They always have been, and always will be so long as there remain warring classes and warring interests in the nations of the world. It matters not to Australia how this motion is dealt with. Australia has no guarantee of peace from any Treaty. When any nation desires to invade our shores, and considers that it is strong enough to do so, it will. Australia's only protection against foreign aggression



lies in her capacity to defend herself, and the capacity of her people to carry arms in the defence of the country can be secured only by Australia ridding herself of the obligations of debt imposed upon her. When that is done every man will be able to carry arms in the defence of his country from the attack of enemies both without and within.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Motions (by Mr. HUGHES) agreed to—

That this House approves the Treaty between the United States of America, the British Empire, France, Italy, and Japan for the limitation of naval armament, signed at Washington on the 6th February, 1922.

That this House approves the Treaty between the United States of America, the British Empire, France, Italy, and Japan for the protection of the lives of neutrals and non-combatants at sea in time of war and to prevent the use in war of noxious gases and chemicals, signed at Washington on the 6th February, 1922.

That this House approves the Treaty between the United States of America, Belgium, the British Empire, China, France, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, and Portugal relating to principles and policies to be followed in matters concerning China, signed at Washington on the 6th February, 1922.

That this House approves the Treaty between the United States of America, Belgium, the British Empire, China, France, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, and Portugal relating to the Chinese Customs Tariff, signed at Washington on the 6th February, 1922.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT.

### SUGAR: COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT

#### CONTROL: BALANCE-SHEET.

Debate resumed from 21st July (*vide* page 741) on motion by Mr. RODGERS—

That the paper—"Commonwealth Government Sugar Control—Balance-sheet as at 30th June, 1922; profit and loss account for the period from 19th July, 1915, to 30th June, 1922; trading and profit and loss account for the period from 19th July, 1915, to 30th June, 1922—operating and trading accounts"—be printed.

MR. CHARLTON (Hunter) [9.8].—In discussing the statement made on 21st inst. by the Minister for Trade and Customs (Mr. Rodgers) in regard to the Commonwealth Government sugar control and the balance-sheet as at 30th June, 1922, I wish to make it clear that this debate has no reference whatever to the question of the renewal of the existing sugar agreement. As honorable members know, that agreement will run until about April of next year, so that we may reasonably anticipate that the House will

have an opportunity of dealing with it at a later stage. In this discussion we are confined to a consideration of the actual working of the sugar control, and the position as it stands to-day from a financial point of view. I think it will be admitted that having regard to the magnitude of the undertaking, the statement presented by the Minister is very unsatisfactory. I say, without fear of contradiction, that the statement of accounts as submitted to us does not give us an opportunity to deal with the question in an intelligent manner. The balance-sheet is in respect of a period of seven years, and is absolutely devoid of detail. The Government assumed control of the industry as far back as July, 1915, and this is the first balance-sheet that has been issued. Would any private enterprise having the control of a business of this magnitude, involving the handling of millions of money, be content to go on year after year without issuing a balance-sheet for the information of those concerned? That, however, is what the Government have done in this case; and it is on a par with everything undertaken by them since the commencement of the war. There has grown up a practice under which the spending of millions of money is handed over by the Government to Boards, and Parliament is afforded no information as to what is actually taking place. It is a system which should end at the earliest possible moment. We should get back to responsible government. That is what the Opposition has been fighting for for a considerable time.

In response to our demand for a statement of what has been done in regard to the sugar control, so that we may know whether the high price that is being charged for sugar is justified, we have submitted to us a bald statement of accounts so compiled that even an accountant would find it impossible to say whether the figures were correct. What we desire is information as to how the revenue for this purpose was obtained, where the sugar was purchased, what quantity was acquired within Australia, and what quantity was purchased abroad. With such details we should have some information for our guidance. The Minister, when asked, said he would be prepared later on to give details, but that it would take some time to furnish them because the "sugar year" had not yet

ended. I interpreted that statement to mean that if the statement were not discussed at the present time the desired information would not be available until the end of the present year, or just as we were about to go into recess. In the circumstances, it becomes necessary for us to do the best we can with the balance-sheet that has been submitted.

There are one or two items to which I would direct special attention. We have, for instance, in the Trading and Profit and Loss Account the item, "Foreign (landed cost in Australia), £18,750,034 11s. 4d." Not one word by way of explanation of these figures was uttered by the Minister. We are asked to be content with the bald statement that this bulk sum was paid for sugar purchased outside Australia between July, 1915, and June, 1922. Surely we should have from the Minister a statement as to where the sugar was purchased, and whether it was obtained from different firms or individuals.

Mr. ATKINSON.—Also what it cost in the country of origin.

Mr. CHARLTON.—Yes; and what was paid by way of freight, and also the distributing costs.

Mr. AUSTIN CHAPMAN.—Further, we should be told the price at which that sugar was offered a month or so before the Commonwealth purchased it.

Mr. CHARLTON.—If what the honorable member for Franklin (Mr. McWilliams) has said as to that be correct, then the Government made a very bad deal on a certain occasion. We paid for certain sugar double the price at which it could have been obtained a month or two before. In respect of all these matters we should be furnished with full information. Another item of which honorable members should take note is that appearing in the list of assets, "Commonwealth of Australia—Payment to Treasury—Profits. £415,000." What does that mean? We have been paying the Commonwealth Bank interest on a debt incurred in connexion with the purchase of sugar abroad.

Mr. BRENNAN.—Should not the Minister for Trade and Customs be here?

Mr. GREENE.—We have sent for him.

Mr. CHARLTON.—He should be here to furnish an explanation; to supply us with information.

Mr. AUSTIN CHAPMAN.—Move the adjournment of the debate.

Mr. CHARLTON.—I do not want to go so far as that; but the Minister for Trade and Customs is the only member of the Government who can supply us with the particulars we desire. After allowing for the item of £415,000, the Minister finds he has a deficit of £255,186. I desire some information about that item, but as the Minister is not present, I feel inclined to move the adjournment of the debate.

Mr. GREENE.—I have sent for him. He will be here presently.

Mr. CHARLTON.—I do not wish to waste my time by attempting to deal with this matter in the Minister's absence. It is his duty to be here.

*Several honorable members interjecting,*

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. Sir Elliot Johnson).—Order!

Mr. CHARLTON.—I do not wish to take the business out of the hands of the Government, but it is useless for me to proceed in the absence of the Minister.

Mr. GREENE.—I have sent for him; that is all I can do.

Mr. CHARLTON.—It is simply wasting time to attempt to speak when the Minister is not here to give honorable members the information they require. I ask leave to continue my remarks.

Mr. GREENE.—No.

Mr. FENTON.—Play the game!

Mr. SPEAKER.—Order!

*Other honorable members interjecting,*

Mr. SPEAKER.—I take this opportunity of intimating that if, after I have called for order, an honorable member offends, I shall name him without further warning. I give this fair warning to the House. I am not obliged to do so, and I have warned the House time after time that I will not continue to repeat a call for order that has not been obeyed, but will take action against the offender.

Mr. CHARLTON.—Now that the Minister for Trade and Customs has entered the chamber, I again draw attention to the item of £415,000, representing profits paid to the Treasury and included in the assets. I desire to know whether that money was paid some time in the past out of profits made by the Sugar Commission, and is now being refunded in order to make up this balance-sheet over the seven years' period. In view of the fact that we have been buying sugar for a con-



siderable time past, and have been losing a vast sum of money, a profit of £415,000 cannot possibly have been made in recent years. It must have been paid into the Treasury in 1915 or 1916, before the Commission commenced to purchase sugar at all; but we have heard no word of it until now. Whilst the Treasury holds that sum, there has been an overdraft at the Commonwealth Bank on which the people of Australia have been paying interest. The item for interest is shown in the balance-sheet. Why was not the £415,000 of profits credited to the Commission to help to liquidate the liabilities?

Mr. RODGERS.—Because the House, including the honorable member, voted for it to be paid to the Treasury.

Mr. CHARLTON.—I have no recollection of that happening.

Mr. RODGERS.—The amount was appropriated by Parliament, and the honorable member voted for it.

Mr. CHARLTON.—Now I am getting the information I want. It was never intended, when we created a Commission to control sugar, that profits should be paid into the Treasury. It would have been unfair to make a profit of £400,000 each year out of the people and pay it into the Treasury.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—That is nothing new.

Mr. CHARLTON.—There are lots of things, which, though not new, should not be. Now I know where these profits of £415,000 have come from. If it was a legitimate thing to pay that money into the Treasury, and it was so appropriated by vote of the House, what power is there to put it back into this balance-sheet?

Mr. RODGERS.—The honorable member knows that the amount must take its place in the balance-sheet, no matter where it has gone. It must be accounted for.

Mr. CHARLTON.—Of course it must be accounted for, and but for the fact that this balance-sheet covers a seven years' period, we would have known nothing about it.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—The honorable member for Wide Bay (Mr. Corser) complained many times about this payment to the Treasury.

Mr. CORSER.—That is so, and I moved the adjournment of the House on the subject.

Mr. CHARLTON.—The honorable member for Wide Bay will agree with me that that money should have been paid to the Sugar Commission, and not to revenue.

Mr. CORSER.—The Prime Minister promised me in the House that not a fraction would be paid into Consolidated Revenue, after I complained.

Mr. RODGERS.—And since that date no profit has gone to revenue. The people have had their sugar at cost price.

Mr. CHARLTON.—Now we clearly understand that the £415,000 is not a refund from the Treasury.

Mr. RODGERS.—Of course it is not a refund from the Treasury. When making my statement on Friday week, I promised that I would deal subsequently in detail with all the accounts, and I will fulfil that promise.

Mr. CHARLTON.—In seven years we have dealt with over £60,000,000 worth of sugar, and this balance-sheet shows a debit balance of £255,186. The total quantity of sugar handled in the seven years was 1,997,178 tons, of which 1,530,391 tons was Australian, and 466,787 tons foreign. If there is a debit of only £255,186, and the money has to appear in this balance-sheet, and there is no necessity to make it up, how is it that the price of sugar is not to be reduced to 5d. per lb. before the 1st November.

Mr. CORSER.—That return does not show the cost of all the sugar. Some of it was high-priced.

Mr. CHARLTON.—When I was speaking on the Budget statement last year, the honorable member claimed that my statement that only £80,000 had been paid in rebates to jam manufacturers was incorrect. This balance-sheet shows that the amount was £65,295. Different speakers have attempted to make the public believe that a great deal of the money expended on sugar is accounted for by rebates to jam and confectionery manufacturers. Now we have the actual facts before us. The weekly consumption of sugar is about 5,400 tons. From the end of June to the 1st of November will be about seventeen and a half weeks, and during that period the Commonwealth will net at 1d. per lb. £882,000. That is why I want to be clear as to the meaning of this item of £415,000.

Mr. CORSER.—Does the honorable member know that there may be a lot of the sugar which cost £80 per ton still unsold.

Mr. CHARLTON.—I do not know that, and neither does the honorable member. I have before me a statement from the Government, and upon that statement the House must judge the position.

Mr. CORSER.—We cannot do it.

Mr. CHARLTON.—Then what is the good of the statement. Whenever the supporters of the sugar administration find themselves getting into a corner, they begin to squib, and assert that something is not right. On Friday week, the Minister for Trade and Customs held up this balance-sheet with pride, and said that it had been audited, not only by his own officers, but by one of the chief accountants in Melbourne. Now when I base upon the information it contains a statement that an injustice is being done to the sugar consumers, I am at once told that the balance-sheet does not show everything. Where are we? Is there any reliable information in regard to these transactions? Does this House count for nothing? It appears to me that we cannot place any reliance on a statement that comes from a Minister. Immediately one challenges its figures, the completeness of the statement is questioned. I desire to know why the Minister is charging the people between the end of June and the 1st November a price for sugar that will net the Commonwealth £882,000, when the deficit to be made up is only £255,186. Is it the intention of the Government to recover the £415,000 the Minister says has been appropriated? Has that amount to be added to the £255,186? It seems to me that there is in these figures something to be answered. It is easy enough to produce a lot of figures *in globo*, and when they are analyzed and their defects are made known to make excuses in regard to them. It is a plain sum in arithmetic. What right have we to charge the people 5d. per lb. only from the 1st November if these figures are correct? I know that the Minister has said, in reply to a question which might have been inspired, that, if it could be shown that the Commonwealth Government had received their money back before the 1st November, the price of sugar would be reduced. I ask the

Minister to submit his figures to an accountant, and ask how long it will take the Government to get back £255,186 at the price fixed?

Mr. RODGERS.—The honorable member knows that the amount of £255,186 represents the figure as ascertained on the 30th June. The sugar year has yet to be ended. It runs to the end of September. Who can tell in advance the exact quantity of consumption, the cost of management, interest, adjustments, &c? All these items I shall explain when I reply. I cannot do so now; otherwise I would close the debate.

Mr. CHARLTON.—We have the statement to the end of June, which the Minister considered correct last Friday week.

Mr. RODGERS.—What I gave the House was an interim correct balance-sheet. I explained that I would give the detailed balance-sheet for each year, and on giving that undertaking, I sent accountants to Sydney who have been closely at work preparing individual balance-sheets. They are working as rapidly as possible, and every assistance is being given to them by the companies.

Mr. CHARLTON.—The figures which the Minister presented he claimed to be accurate. He said that details would be supplied later on, but that the figures as they stood were unquestionably correct.

Mr. RODGERS.—Yes; to the 30th June.

Mr. CHARLTON.—I am putting the proposition as on the 30th June. From that date until the 1st November is seventeen and a-half weeks. With a consumption of 5,400 tons per week the Commonwealth will receive £882,000 to make up a loss of £255,186. How can we justify asking the people to pay 6d. per lb. to the 1st November on the figures as presented to this Chamber? The cost of control for seven years has been £5,727, which is less than  $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per ton. Allowing  $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per ton on a consumption of 5,400 tons per week for seventeen and a-half weeks we can estimate that £295 must be set aside for this purpose. Interest to be added, taking the proportion of other interest shown for seven years, should absorb £11,926 in the seventeen and a-half weeks. The deficit on the balance-sheet is shown at £255,186. The total amount therefore to be made up from the people should not be more than £267,407, but the Government will receive £882,000,



that is to say, actually £614,593 more than required. That is the position as taken from the Minister's own figures. I leave him to answer it. The deficit shown on the Minister's figures ought to be wiped out in six weeks, because by the middle of this month the Government will have recovered the whole of the money which is necessary to bring about a reduction in the price of sugar. By charging an extra 1d. per lb., the Government will have collected £302,400 in that period, a little over the deficit shown on the balance-sheet, but leaving a small margin to meet any additional expenses that may have been incurred.

On 30th March, 1920, the Prime Minister, speaking to an adjournment motion, submitted by my late respected leader (Mr. Tudor), said—

The position, therefore, may be summarized as follows:—

|                                                                                                        | £                |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| Loss on sugar sold 23rd March to 30th June, 75,484 tons, at £12 10s.                                   | 943,302          |
| Loss on 20,000 tons Cubas, sold from 1st July to new crop ..                                           | 590,000          |
|                                                                                                        | <hr/> £1,533,302 |
| Profit on Queensland and New South Wales crop, 1st July to 1st March, 1921—145,000 tons, at £7 10s. .. | 1,987,500        |
| Credit balance in sugar account on 31st December, 1919 ..                                              | 225,000          |
| Deficit—£220,802 ..                                                                                    | <hr/> £1,312,500 |

That was the deficit on the 1st March, 1921, and from that time to the present we have had no statement upon the sugar question except by way of answers to questions submitted from time to time. The figures given by the Prime Minister, which evidently were prepared by officials, showed a deficit of £220,802. Surely the House should be told why very heavily increased expenditure has been incurred in regard to sugar purchased since the 1st March, 1921! We have not had any explanation in the statement made by the Minister. If we have been charging 6d. per lb. for sugar since that date, we must have collected millions of pounds, and still we have a deficit of £255,186. I understand, although I have not been told of it, that some sugar was purchased abroad after the 1st March, 1921, and that the cost had to be made good; but we should have had that information supplied

in this House. How can we deal with a matter of this kind if there is no such statement? This business is being carried on year after year without any presentation of annual balance-sheets, or without any true statement of accounts being rendered to the House, and yet honorable members are expected to explain the exact position of sugar to the people. There is another statement made by the Prime Minister to which the Minister for Trade and Customs might give special attention: The right honorable gentleman, speaking on the 30th March, 1920, said that the increase in price from 3½d. to 6d. per lb. was caused, among other things, by 1½d. per lb. due in consequence of the purchase of foreign sugar to meet consumption. Now the Government tell us they propose to reduce the price by 1d. per lb. The Prime Minister said that 1½d. was added to the price of sugar to reimburse the Government for purchases made abroad, and I am sure he would not make such a statement unless he was supplied with it by his officials. In corroboration of his statement, Mr. Gillies, a Queensland Minister, said that there was an additional charge of 1½d. per lb.; and Mr. Walker, who represented the sugar people, said that there was an additional 1½d. per lb. to cover the cost of bringing in sugar from abroad, to meet additional profits made by the Sugar Refining Company, and to give a little extra to the retailers. I think Mr. Theodore also said that there was an additional 1½d. per lb. But why is the cost of sugar to be reduced by 1d. only? It seems to me, in the face of the statements of these four gentlemen, that there is room for explanation. At any rate, taking the amount received by the Government as being 1½d. per lb., on a consumption of 5,400 tons per week for 17½ weeks, the Government will receive £1,323,000. I have already shown that the deficit, cost of management, and the proportion of interest are likely to absorb £267,407. Deducting this amount from £1,323,000 to be collected in the period at 1½d. per lb., we find that the net amount to be received by the Government will be £1,055,593 more than is required for the purpose of liquidating the outstanding debt.

Mr. RODGERS.—With the exception of that period of control which was dealt

with by appropriation in the House, I undertake, on behalf of the Government, that the people will get their sugar at absolute cost price, plus the cost of management.

Mr. CHARLTON.—Of course. We heard the Minister say so last Friday week, and we have heard the same statement on several occasions; but we must deal with facts as they are presented to us here.

Mr. RODGERS.—I quite admit that; but, at the same time, the public will recognise the vast amount of material in the form of figures which had to be got from sources outside our departmental records. We have been working at top speed to get that.

Mr. CHARLTON.—It is unfortunate that the Minister cannot face the position. It would have been better for him not to present his statement rather than to present one in which criticism shows there are many leaks.

Mr. RODGERS.—I challenge criticism from any part of Australia on that balance-sheet.

Mr. CHARLTON.—Any one could do that. One could, in sporting parlance, lay 1,000 to 1 that any accountant taking the figures *in globo* would declare them to be correct. It would be no business of his to ascertain who bought the sugar, or where it was bought, or the cost of retailing, and so forth. His business would simply be to certify to the correctness of the accounts. It is the responsibility of honorable members to see if, by criticism of the balance-sheet, they can point out anything wrong in it. That is what I am endeavouring to do. It is the duty of the Minister to answer that criticism to the satisfaction of the people of Australia. In support of my contention, I am quoting the Prime Minister and other authorities who have said that 1½d. per lb. is being charged by the Government. Let me state the position covering the period from 31st March, 1921, to 1st July, 1922—a period of fifteen months. The Prime Minister said that he estimated a deficit to 30th March, 1921, amounting to £220,802. The approximate consumption for that period was 337,000 tons. The item of 1½d. per lb. is equivalent to £14 per ton; so that

the Government should have £4,718,000 in hand. From this should be deducted £20 per ton rebate on the quantity supplied to jam, milk, and confectionery manufacturers. This rebate was first given in September of last year. The total amount of the rebate is £65,295, which represents 3,264 tons exported for the nine months ended June last. That is the actual position. The Prime Minister says that 1½d. has been collected in order to refund the amount outstanding to the Government. Other authorities say the same, so that that must be accepted for fact. Honorable members want to know why the Government have not reduced the price by 1½d., or why they are not doing so at once.

Mr. RODGERS.—The honorable member will get all the facts. The House will be provided with the details of every purchase which has been made outside of Australia—every particular regarding cost. The company is busy at work preparing the details.

Mr. CHARLTON.—I have nothing to say against the agreement at present. It has still some time to run. I am concerned in seeing justice done at this moment to the consumers. I believe in good conditions for the cane-grower and the employee. Neither of these parties is getting more than a fair thing. But I doubt whether the Colonial Sugar Refining Company is not getting a better deal than it is entitled to have.

Mr. CORSER.—That is not possible under the agreement.

Mr. CHARLTON.—The company made between £400,000 and £500,000 profit last year.

Mr. CORSER.—Where?

Mr. CHARLTON.—That is what I have asked the Government, and what I would like to know. The information should be provided. Last year the company considerably increased its profits. It may have made them outside of Australia.

Mr. GREENE.—The honorable member can tell to 1d. what the company made out of the Commonwealth by multiplying the amount which we paid to it by the number of tons which the company treated. Out of that the company has to pay all its expenses.

Mr. CHARLTON.—I know that for the year ending 31st March, 1920, the



company's net profits were £289,565, representing a percentage to capital of 8.90; that for the year ending 31st March, 1921, its profits were £326,939, representing 11 per cent.; and that for the year ending 31st March, 1922, its profits were £452,191, a percentage to capital of 17.39. During that last-mentioned period the company paid to its shareholders a bonus amounting, I think, to £4 for every share. Without doubt, the Colonial Sugar Refining Company has been on a good wicket.

Mr. RODGERS.—The honorable member should not forget that representatives of his own party in Queensland sit on the Sugar Council, and that they have not raised this issue. They know the position.

Mr. CHARLTON.—They do not go into the financial side as we do.

Mr. RODGERS.—Some of them are members of Parliament.

Mr. CHARLTON.—They are not responsible to the electors of the Commonwealth. I shall not speak further upon the agreement itself. I take it that the matter must come before Parliament before it expires, since the agreement will end before the next Parliament meets. Apart altogether from the agreement, I am satisfied that the price can be reduced by the middle of this month. I could have no greater authority for saying so than the Prime Minister himself. The deficit having been worked off, the 1½d. per lb. taken out by the Government should be released. I move, by way of amendment, therefore—

That the following words be added to the motion:—

"and the retail price of sugar be reduced to 4½d. per lb. from the 7th August, 1922."

Debate (on motion by Mr. PRATTEN) adjourned.

#### AUTOMATIC TELEPHONE EXCHANGE, SOUTH BRISBANE.

Motion (by Mr. RICHARD FOSTER) agreed to—

That, in accordance with the provisions of the Commonwealth Public Works Committee Act 1913-1914, it is expedient to carry out the following proposed work:—

Automatic Telephone Exchange at South Brisbane (Queensland), which was referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, and on which the Committee has duly reported to this House the result of its investigations.

#### COMMONWEALTH DEPARTMENTS, OFFICE ACCOMMODATION, ADELAIDE.

Motion (by Mr. RICHARD FOSTER) agreed to—

That, in accordance with the provisions of the Commonwealth Public Works Committee Act 1913-1914, it is expedient to carry out the following proposed work:—

Adelaide—Provision of office accommodation for various Commonwealth Departments, which was referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, and on which the Committee has duly reported to this House the result of its investigations.

#### GENERAL POST OFFICE, SYDNEY.

##### REMODELLING AND ADDITIONS.

Motion (by Mr. RICHARD FOSTER) proposed—

That, in accordance with the provisions of the Commonwealth Public Works Committee Act 1913-1914, it is expedient to carry out the following proposed work:—

Remodelling and Additions, General Post Office, Sydney, which was referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, and on which the Committee has duly reported to this House the result of its investigations.

Debate (on motion by Dr. EARLE PAGE) adjourned.

#### AUTOMATIC TELEPHONE EXCHANGES.

##### BRIGHTON, GLENELG, AND PROSPECT, SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

Motion (by Mr. RICHARD FOSTER) agreed to—

That, in accordance with the provisions of the Commonwealth Public Works Committee Act 1913-1914, it is expedient to carry out the following proposed works:—

Provision of Automatic Telephone Exchanges at Brighton, Glenelg, and Prospect, South Australia, which were referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, and on which the Committee has duly reported to this House the result of its investigations.

#### LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

Motion (by Mr. GREENE) (*by leave*) agreed to—

That leave of absence for one month be given to the honorable member for Dampier (Mr. Gregory), on the ground of ill-health, and to the honorable member for Grampians (Mr. Jowett) on the ground of urgent public business.

House adjourned at 9.59 p.m.

## Senate.

Thursday, 3 August, 1922.

The PRESIDENT (Senator the Hon. T. Givens) took the chair at 3 p.m., and read prayers.

### PAPERS.

The following papers were presented:—

Willis Island Meteorological Station—Report by Captain J. K. Davis.

Ordered to be printed.

Public Service Act—Promotion of W. C. Street, Postmaster-General's Department. Territory for the Seat of Government—Ordinance No. 5 of 1922—Interpretation.

### DEATH OF HON. F. G. TUDOR.

#### REPLY TO RESOLUTION OF CONDOLENCE.

The PRESIDENT (Senator the Hon. T. Givens).—I have to inform the Senate that I have received the following reply from Mrs. Tudor to the resolution of condolence passed by the Senate:—

263 Stawell-street, Burnley,  
28th July, 1922.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT,

I desire to thank you for the bound and other copies of resolutions passed appreciative of my late husband's public services, also speeches made in the Senate. They will be treasured by me, as they, in no small degree, comfort me in my great loss.

Yours very sincerely,  
FANNY J. TUDOR.

### DEFENCE FORCE.

#### GENERALS ENGAGED AT HEAD-QUARTERS, MELBOURNE.

Senator GARDINER asked the Minister representing the Minister for Defence, *upon notice*—

1. How many generals were engaged at headquarters, Melbourne, before the recent re-trenchment scheme was given effect to?

2. How many officers holding the rank of general are at present engaged at headquarters, Melbourne?

3. What are the respective salaries of the generals at present engaged at headquarters, Melbourne?

4. How many are in receipt of pensions owing to incapacity brought about by the recent war?

5. How many are receiving a salary as high as or higher than that which they received prior to the war?

Senator PEARCE.—The Minister for Defence has supplied the following answers:—

1. There were four substantive generals—including the Director-General, Medical Services—and one temporary general, who were paid as generals. In addition, there were five honorary generals who, by reason of the ranks gained by them on active service with the Australian Imperial Force, were allowed to retain their ranks, but who were paid at the rate for their substantive rank (colonel).

2. Four substantive generals (including the Director-General of Medical Services) paid as generals, and four honorary generals paid as colonels—the latter number will shortly be further reduced by one.

3. Three at £1,500, and one at £1,050. The honorary generals receive £890.

4. None.

5. All.

### WAR SERVICE HOMES.

#### AGREEMENT WITH SOUTH AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT—HOMES BUILT IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

Senator ROWELL asked the Minister for Repatriation, *upon notice*—

1. Is it a fact that the Minister has refused to pay the final £62,500 to be provided for War Service Homes, on the plea that the agreement between the Commonwealth and State Governments has not been signed?

2. Is the agreement in conformity with the agreement made between the Commonwealth Minister then dealing with the question and the State Minister?

Senator E. D. MILLEN.—The answer is:—

1 and 2. The memorandum signed by the then Assistant Minister and the State Minister for Repatriation provided for a loan of only £800,000 during last financial year. When the formal agreement, in accordance with this memorandum, was prepared and submitted to the South Australian Government for approval, they contended that an error had been made in the memorandum, and that the contemplated loan should be for £1,000,000. The Commonwealth agreed to increase the loan as requested, and continued to advance moneys to the South Australian Government in good faith; but when the agreement was engrossed and submitted for signature, the South Australian Government held it up for weeks, and subsequently submitted an entirely new agreement. In view of this action, it is not thought unreasonable to require the completion of the agreement before further advances are made. The new agreement submitted by the South Australian Government has been referred to the Commonwealth Crown Law authorities.



Senator ROWELL asked the Minister for Repatriation, *upon notice*—

1. How many houses were built in South Australia under the War Service Homes Act prior to the agreement between the State and Commonwealth Governments?

2. What was the average cost?

3. What was the total expenditure incurred?

Senator E. D. MILLEN.—The answers are—

1. The Commonwealth Bank, under the arrangement with War Service Homes Commission, constructed 110 houses in South Australia prior to the arrangement with the State Government for building by the State Savings Bank.

2. The average cost of these 110 houses was—

Without land, £721 5s.

With land, £774 6s. 9d.

Attention is directed to page 4 of the sixth progress report of the Joint Committee of Public Accounts, where reference is made to this matter.

3. The total expenditure incurred under the War Service Homes Act in South Australia, in connexion with building, purchasing existing houses, and lifting mortgages, exclusive of the expenditure by the State Bank of advances by the Commonwealth Government, was £223,483.

## FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY.

### REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE.

Senator DUNCAN (for Senator THOMAS) asked the Minister for Home and Territories, *upon notice*—

1. What is the total expenditure out of revenue and loan respectively with regard to the Federal Capital Territory for the years 1919-1920, 1920-1921, and 1921-1922?

2. What were the total receipts in respect of the Federal Capital Territory for the same years respectively?

Senator PEARCE.—The answers are—

1. The total expenditure out of revenue and loan with regard to the Federal Capital Territory for the years 1919-1920, 1920-1921, and 1921-1922 is as follows:—

| Year.     | Expenditure.  |    |    |            |    |    | Total.       |
|-----------|---------------|----|----|------------|----|----|--------------|
|           | From Revenue. |    |    | From Loan. |    |    |              |
|           | £             | s. | d. | £          | s. | d. |              |
| 1919-20.. | 31,926        | 7  | 3  | 11,916     | 1  | 6  | 43,842 8 9   |
| 1920-21.. | 51,466        | 0  | 9  | 83,232     | 6  | 2  | 134,698 6 11 |
| 1921-22.. | 56,873        | 12 | 8  | 148,423    | 18 | 11 | 205,297 11 7 |
| Totals..  | 140,266       | 0  | 8  | 243,572    | 6  | 7  | 383,838 7 3  |

2. The total receipts in respect of the Federal Capital Territory for the years 1919-1920, 1920-1921, and 1921-1922 were as follows:—

| Year.       | Revenue. |    |             |
|-------------|----------|----|-------------|
|             | £        | s. | d.          |
| 1919-20 ... | ..       | .. | 26,897 14 5 |
| 1920-21 ..  | ..       | .. | 33,101 14 8 |
| 1921-22 ..  | ..       | .. | 33,893 14 3 |

Totals .. .. £93,893 3 4

## CASE OF CAPTAIN J. STRASBURG.

### APPOINTMENT OF SELECT COMMITTEE.

Senator GARDINER (New South Wales) [3.8].—I move—

That a Select Committee be appointed, with power to send for persons and papers, to inquire into the claims of Captain J. Strasburg for a war gratuity; the Committee to consist of Senators Glasgow, Drake-Brockman, Foster, Cox, Henderson, Wilson, and the mover.

The Government have very kindly gone out of their way to give me an opportunity of moving this motion. It is not my intention to discuss it. As I understand that it will not be opposed, I content myself with submitting it.

Senator E. D. MILLEN (New South Wales—Minister for Repatriation) [3.9].—I wish to add but one word to what has been said on this motion. There is no intention on the part of the Government to oppose it, but I declared it informal in order that the mover and the Senate might understand that, in agreeing to the appointment of the Select Committee, the action of the Government must not be interpreted as in the slightest degree admitting that there is any merit in the claims put forward on behalf of the gentleman concerned.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

*Ordered*—

That the Committee report to the Senate on Thursday next.

## ELECTORAL BILL.

*In Committee* (Consideration resumed from 2nd August, *vide* page 995):

Clause 2—

Section 39 of the principal Act is amended by adding at the end of sub-section (3.) the following provisos:—

“Provided that an elector whose place of living is not *bonâ fide* in the division in respect of which he is enrolled shall not be entitled to vote as an elector of that division if, since he secured that enrolment, he has at any time before the commencement of the period of twenty-one days before the issue of the writ for the election, become entitled to be enrolled in respect of another division:

Provided further that nothing in this sub-section shall disentitle an elector from voting in respect of the division for which he is enrolled if he is temporarily absent from his place of living therein with a fixed intention of returning thereto for the purpose of continuing to live therein.”

*Section proposed to be amended*—

39.

(3) All persons whose names are on the roll for any electoral division shall, subject to this Act, be entitled to vote at elections of members of the Senate for the State of which the division forms part, and at elections of members of the House of Representatives for the division, but no person shall be entitled to vote more than once at any Senate election or any House of Representatives election, or at more than one election for the Senate or for the House of Representatives held on the same day.

Senator GARLING (New South Wales) [3.12].—Before the clause is passed, I should like to direct the attention of the Minister to sub-section 5 of section 41, of the principal Act, which is as follows—

The validity of any enrolment shall not in any case be questioned on the ground that the person enrolled has not, in fact, lived in the subdivision for a period of one month.

It appears to me that this sub-section will conflict with sub-section 3 of section 39 if the proviso is passed in its present form.

Senator PEARCE (Western Australia—Minister for Home and Territories) [3.13].—At first glance, the point raised by the honorable senator appears to have something in it, but I have not had sufficient time to examine it, and to say definitely. Before the Bill leaves our possession, I will ascertain whether it will be necessary to amend the sub-section referred to.

Senator GARDINER (New South Wales) [3.14].—I move—

That the words "*bonâ fide*," line 5, be left out with a view to insert in lieu thereof the word "actually."

I am submitting this amendment because the English word is less ambiguous, and is perfectly understood by all persons speaking the English language. The words *bonâ fide* may mean "good faith," which is the sense in which it is more commonly used, also "really," or "actually." As we are legislating for English speaking people, it is desirable that, while there may be no objection to the incorporation into our language of foreign words to express more clearly the meanings of our Acts, the use of easily understood English words should be encouraged.

Senator PEARCE.—As an admirer of the English language, I accept the honorable senator's amendment.

Amendment agreed to.

Senator MacDONALD (Queensland) [3.15].—I listened carefully to the reply by the Minister (Senator Pearce) to the

second-reading debate, and I am sorry to say that he said so little that he was unable to remove my fear that this clause will work an injustice to country workers who, by reason of their avocation, may have to travel considerable distances while earning their living. I object *in toto* to the two provisos. The Minister hinted that there were some reasons why they should be inserted, but the only suspicion of anything I heard in the rally that took place between him and Senator Gardiner was that something had happened at Ballarat. We have heard a good deal about double voting, impersonation, and electoral corruption at the 1913 election, but after a Royal Commission, which had been appointed, had travelled tens of thousands of miles making inquiries into the allegations, the verdict was that not a single Australian had been found guilty of impersonation.

Senator GARLING.—I rise to a point of order. I ask if, in Committee, the honorable senator may refer to what was said during the second-reading debate.

The CHAIRMAN (Senator Bakhap).—I think it would be a too literal interpretation of our Standing Orders if I were to adopt the view suggested. So long as the honorable senator's remarks are relevant to the clause under review, and to the Bill, it is not desirable for the Chair to intervene.

Senator MacDONALD.—It is my intention to keep as closely as possible to the clause.

Senator EARLE.—But you have not touched it yet.

Senator MacDONALD.—My trouble is that the Minister has not helped to remove my doubts, and I am still, to some extent, in the dark, as I was during the second-reading debate. Really the Minister has said nothing upon the point I raised, and I still see a danger to itinerant country workers through the operations of these provisos. There is no doubt that the simpler we make the approaches to the polling booth the better it will be if we wish to apply the principles of a pure Democracy.

Senator PAYNE.—Does not the second proviso protect the worker?

Senator MacDONALD.—To me it makes confusion worse confounded; it appears to remove the need for the first proviso, and to take away from the returning officer the power given to him. I have not heard from the Minister any



sound reasons for the proposal. In the conduct of a Federal election, especially for the House of Representatives, where 40,000 electors are concerned, a case of impersonation in Melbourne, or four or five at Cairns, would not have the slightest effect on the result. No Australian is so anxious to fulfil his duty to his country as to invite the penalties imposed by the principal Act. Such irregularities do not take place in any number, and I cannot see the need for such proposals, which will confuse the elector, and give the returning officer too much power.

Senator CRAWFORD.—Does not the honorable senator think that the way of the transgressor should be hard?

Senator MACDONALD.—I do; but if every little offence is to be made a crime the gaols may become full. I rose to express my opinion that the Minister did not give the information I asked for in his second-reading speech, and to repeat my opinion that these two provisos will make the path of the country elector, who has to travel long distances to earn his living, harder than it is under the principal Act.

Senator PEARCE (Western Australia—Minister for Home and Territories) [3.24].—I do not understand why I should be lectured by Senator MacDonald because he was absent when I made my remarks on this clause. The honorable senator seems to be under a delusion about it. The clause has nothing to do with impersonation, nor has the section of the Act that this clause amends. What the amendment is intended to do is to prevent persons from voting who have ceased to live in the division for which they are enrolled, and have before the commencement of a period of twenty-one days before the issue of the writ for the election, become entitled to enrolment for some other division. The reason for fixing the period of twenty-one days is to make it clear that the change of enrolment cannot take place after the issue of the writs. An elector who secured enrolment more than twenty-one days before the issue of the writs would not be guilty of a violation of the Act. It is to prevent a number of electors concentrating on one election and influencing the result. It will not apply to a person who is temporarily absent from a division, and who intends to return to his place of residence. It will

not affect an elector who is absent from a State or a division for three months for the purpose of transacting business in another State or another division. It represents an attempt to keep our rolls pure, and to prevent the chance winning of an election by the transference for that purpose of electors who have no *bond fide* intention of living there.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 3—

After section seventy-two of the principal Act the following section is inserted:—

72A.—(1.) Candidates nominated for election to the Senate may claim to have their names grouped in the ballot-papers in the manner prescribed in this Act.

(2.) A group of candidates shall not be formed unless each of the members of the proposed group notifies the Commonwealth Electoral Officer for the State in the prescribed manner after he has been nominated, and not later than twelve o'clock noon on the day of nomination, that he desires to have his name included in that group with the names of the other candidates in that proposed group, and with those names only.

Senator GARLING (New South Wales) [3.27].—I object to the proposed new section on two grounds. I do not object to the spirit of it, for I can gather the intention from its wording; but I suggest that it is not sufficiently clear. Sub-clause 2 is prohibitory in its nature, and the operative words are that “a group of candidates shall not be formed unless each of the members of the proposed group notifies the Commonwealth Electoral Officer for the State in the prescribed manner . . . .” According to my interpretation of it, the result of it in its present form might easily be different from what is intended. Three men, having already decided to form a group, a fourth man, not with the object of getting into the group, but to prevent the proposed group being formed, might demand to join it. We must then have regard to the mandatory words, “a group of candidates shall not be formed.” The result of the fourth man proposing to go into the group of three might be that the Commonwealth Electoral Officer for the State would not be able to form a group, because the proposing parties would not have the consent of all the proposed parties to the group. There is nothing in the sub-clause to relieve its prohibitory nature. It says that under these circumstances “a group of candidates shall not be formed.” While the

fourth man could not get into the group, he might make it incapable of being formed.

Senator PAYNE.—That might depend upon the regulations.

Senator GARLING.—The regulations will have to be made with due regard to the wording of the Act. The Act is the commanding situation, and the regulations cannot be made to conflict with it. If the words used are literally clear they will have to be accepted, notwithstanding that they may not carry out the intention of Parliament. I suggest an amendment which is designed to make the sub-clause clearer without departing from the spirit of it. With a view to securing this I move—

That sub-clause 2 be left out with a view to insert in lieu thereof the following:—

- (2) A group shall include the names of those candidates only who notify the Commonwealth Electoral Officer for the State in the prescribed manner after they have been nominated, and not later than 12 o'clock noon on the day of nomination that they desire to have their names included in that group with the names of the other candidates in that proposed group, and with those names only.

Senator PEARCE (Western Australia—Minister for Home and Territories) [3.34].—I propose to accept the amendment. I think it is an advantage to have the proposition stated in the affirmative rather than in the negative. It is practically on all fours with what is already in the Bill, but the intention is more clearly expressed in the amendment.

Senator LYNCH (Western Australia) [3.34].—This ready acceptance of the amendment by the Minister (Senator Pearce) proves that the measure, as brought in, has not been too well considered. We have a very important and radical proposal put forward by Senator Garling, and it is accepted by the Minister in a hasty fashion. Sufficient has been said on the second reading to indicate the far-reaching importance of this innovation in our electoral system. There are several features of the clause as it stands, and in the clause as now proposed to be amended, that should not commend themselves to us. In the first place, the object is to reduce to simplicity the method of electing candidates to this Chamber; in other words, to diminish the number of informal votes. I have a return before

me. It shows that under the old system, as practised in 1917—that is, simple majority rule, the average number of informal votes for the whole of the States was 3 per cent. In the case of the House of Representatives, when the simple majority was still in force, the average was 1.6, or practically  $1\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. Preferential voting has since then been introduced for both Chambers, and the result has been that while there has been a very substantial increase in the informal votes in the case of the Senate, there has also been a relative increase in the case of the House of Representatives. Although we are not endeavouring to remedy the defect in regard to the House of Representatives, we are certainly trying to patch up the case in the Senate. South Australia stood at the top of the list under the old system, while New South Wales was at the bottom of the list, having the lowest percentage of informal votes. The law was altered before the last election, and I find that, although New South Wales was the most enlightened State from the point of view of correct voting when it had a small problem to deal with, it showed itself to be the most ignorant State in the Commonwealth when it had to deal with the abstruse problem of choosing three candidates. When we changed the law in order to give the people a more effective means of expressing their will in the choice of Senate candidates—in other words, to wipe out the minority candidate—the informal votes increased from 3 to 8 per cent. in the case of this Chamber. In the other House, in 1917, with the simple majority device, the average number of informal votes for the Commonwealth represented  $1\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. Preferential voting was introduced for the other Chamber, but the informal voting increased to 3.6 per cent., sustaining me in my contention that when we introduced preferential voting for both Chambers, the same degree of ignorance—or, to water it down, let me say the same want of enlightenment—was virtually as manifest in the case of one Chamber as in the other. It is now proposed, however, to leave the other Chamber alone. While we are engaged in trying to create a simple and effective means for the electors to express themselves at the ballot-box in regard to the Senate, why is something not done in the case of the other Chamber? For the simple



reason, that we cannot group the candidates for the other Chamber, because in that case it will not help in the least. The deduction from this reasoning is that when we introduced this system for the purpose of giving the electors a more perfect means of expressing their will at the ballot-box, we naturally complicated the system in a manner that the device now proposed will not cure. The amendment submitted by Senator Garling bristles with difficulties. The sub-clause, in its present form, stipulates that a group of candidates shall not be formed unless certain things are done; but the amendment moved by the honorable senator provides that a group shall include the names of those candidates only who comply with certain provisions, which proposal the Minister has accepted. The position now is that a group shall only include those candidates who have submitted their names to the Commonwealth Electoral Officer for the State, and the question has been asked as to what is to keep some other candidate from claiming his right as a citizen.

Senator GARLING.—What right?

Senator LYNCH.—The right to nominate as a candidate for the Senate.

Senator GARLING.—What is to prevent him from coming forward?

Senator LYNCH.—Senator Garling's proposal will prevent him.

Senator GARLING.—Not at all.

Senator LYNCH.—If, for instance, the executive of the Labour party in New South Wales decides that three Labour candidates shall stand for the Senate, and a fourth candidate informs the executive that he also proposes to stand as a Labour representative, under Senator Garling's proposal will that fourth candidate be deprived of his right to be included in the group?

Senator WILSON.—He will not be able to be included in the group.

Senator LYNCH.—Then where is this innovation leading us, and who is to decide whether a particular candidate shall, or shall not, be included in a group?

Senator DRAKE-BROCKMAN.—The other candidates.

Senator LYNCH.—As I understand the position, every citizen who is qualified has a right to contest an election for this Chamber or the other branch of the Legislature. Can he be included in a particular group?

Senator WILSON.—He cannot get the privileged position in a group.

Senator LYNCH.—That is a crucial point; and according to the interjections hurled at me from all points of the chamber, I am answered both in the affirmative and in the negative. We are seeking to super-impose this discarded Yankee system, which is really the ticket system, into our electoral laws and are finding ourselves in trouble, and before we proceed any further we should be careful to ascertain what the game is. If we are seeking to reduce the number of informal votes by the introduction of this proposal, we shall find ourselves in trouble.

Senator DUNCAN.—The honorable senator expects to be included in the Nationalist ticket.

Senator LYNCH.—Senator Duncan always avoids the main issue by introducing the personal element. I hope that he will show as much independence towards his electors as I have done towards mine. In the words of the negro, I can say, "I am as I am, and you can make me no ammer." I have been returned as a representative of Western Australia notwithstanding my independence, and I have told electors in that State that they should be damned glad to get me to represent them.

This is merely a dignified way of adopting the ticket system, and an endeavour has been made to create the impression that we are introducing something quite new. We had sufficient brains, originality, and initiative to discover the ballot system, which was copied by the United States of America, and we are now borrowing from that country one of their political discards. This Chamber consists of broadminded, independent men, representatives of the States, and at our own instigation we are lowering its dignity by advocating such a system. Let us imagine the humiliating position which will arise when the candidates have to be rounded up into a branding yard, and informed that they will be in A, B, or C pen, as the case may be.

The CHAIRMAN (Senator Bakhap).—Order! The honorable senator's time has expired.

Senator WILSON (South Australia) [3.48].—During the second-reading debate, I made it quite clear that I would

need a great deal of convincing before I would alter my opinion in regard to the grouping of candidates on the ballot-paper. Since that time I have given the matter the consideration which I think it deserves, and I am more convinced than ever that the system is one which the Senate should not adopt in any circumstances. Under the Constitution, the States were given equal representation in the Senate, and the most suitable men have been selected to effectively carry on the work of this Chamber.

Senator BOLTON.—Which they have done.

Senator WILSON.—On some occasions. In reading the debates I have been astonished to find that when the grouping system was last before this Chamber, the majority opposed to the proposal was so great that at the eleventh hour the Government withdrew it. Honorable senators, who in the past have done everything possible to prevent its introduction, have now turned right around and are supporting it. With Senator Lynch, I am compelled to ask what is behind it all? Have some honorable senators had a little more information or enlightenment? Or is it that there is some political move behind this Bill, and that that is what accounts for a proposal to complicate the ballot-paper and make it more difficult to understand?

Senator GARLING.—Why "more" difficult?

Senator WILSON.—Because I think it is sufficiently difficult at present.

Senator GARLING.—This will mean simplification.

Senator WILSON.—The honorable senator may think so, but my experience is that the unfortunate, unthinking individual has always to pay for what lawyers regard as simplification. Those who have a right to express an opinion claim that 50 per cent. of the electors of the Commonwealth are not attached to any party; and I contend that the choice of the electors in elections for the Senate should be wide enough to enable them to select the best men available in the different States. When the electors are called upon to choose one candidate from group "A," another from group "B," a third from group "C," and perhaps also an independent candidate, will any honorable senator contend that this proposal is not an incentive to the electors to cast a block party vote?

Senator GARLING.—It is an incentive.

Senator WILSON.—That is right, and I wish that every other member of the Committee were as honest in his criticism of this Bill as Senator Garling is, because, so far as I can see, many of them desire that the candidates shall be branded "Nationalists," "Liberals," "Labour," "Farmers' party," and so on.

Senator BOLTON.—Of course.

Senator WILSON.—Then I go further, and say that if that is necessary, it is necessary also to make provision for factions and sections of parties. We know that in the Labour party there are three or four sections. There are the Industrial Workers of the World, the Australian Workers Union, the Bolsheviks, and so on; and these are sections to whose ideals even Senator Gardiner will not subscribe. I regard this proposal as one of the most dangerous interferences with the ballot-box that has been submitted for our consideration. I am free to admit that, in view of the present position of politics, a man should have the indorsement of a party.

Senator GARLING.—Hear, hear!

Senator WILSON.—The honorable senator is the only member of the Senate supporting this proposal who has so far been honest enough to admit that he wants a brand put on the candidate himself. He will not induce the Government to admit that.

Senator BOLTON.—The people have the right to know the brand of a candidate.

Senator WILSON.—Of course they should know.

Senator BOLTON.—Why not let them know?

Senator WILSON.—I should not like to say that there is anybody in Victoria who does not know that Senator Bolton is a Nationalist. To say that he did not know that would be to argue himself unknown. Everybody in Victoria knows that the honorable senator is a Nationalist, just as every one in New South Wales knows that Senator Gardiner is a Labour man.

Senator GARDINER.—And yet other honorable senators are always branding me as a "Bolshevik."

Senator WILSON.—Only a moment ago I refused to connect Senator Gardiner with the Bolsheviks in any circumstances whatever. I have too high an opinion of the very great services which



the honorable senator has rendered the Commonwealth in this Senate to do anything of the kind.

Senator GARDINER.—That is all right four years before an election, but if I had to go before the electors within four months, I might be called a Bolshevik or a pro-German.

Senator WILSON.—The honorable senator would not find me saying that.

Senator GARDINER.—I am speaking in a party sense.

Senator WILSON.—I take responsibility only for what I say myself. This proposal is the thin end of the wedge for the introduction of party politics into the ballot-box. During the week-end I have discussed the Bill with some of the finest men in this country. I sought their advice and, without exception, they take the strongest objection to the measure.

Senator GARLING.—My trouble is that I do not know how to brand the honorable senator.

Senator WILSON.—The honorable senator can brand me as he pleases, but if possible, I shall prevent any Returning Officer putting a brand on me.

Senator BOLTON.—What is the honorable senator's brand?

Senator WILSON.—Senator Bolton knows my brand. I have already said that I am privileged to represent the intelligent electors in my State, who will have an opportunity later on of deciding whether their choice was a wise one or not. At the moment I am here as a representative of South Australia; and, while I am not to be dictated to by any party, I am prepared to give effect to the ideals of the party of which I am a member. One of these ideals is that the Senate, being the States House, should be above all parties. That is the attitude which the Country party has always adopted. I hope that the Senate will take up a similar attitude.

Senator LYNCH.—The proposal in the Bill is to make the Senate a House of party wranglers.

Senator WILSON.—That is so. Looking through the debate on a similar proposal previously submitted I found, speaking from memory, that Senator Earle, by interjection that was most clear, complained that this was a proposal to bring party politics into the electoral system. Later on in this debate I may find it necessary to quote extracts from speeches made by honorable senators in the previous debate to which I refer.

Senator LYNCH.—Does the honorable senator say that he quoted a statement by Senator Earle?

Senator WILSON.—Yes; and Senator Earle was not alone in expressing that view. I take the stand that, wherever possible, we should prevent party politics being introduced into our electoral machinery. The Minister (Senator Pearce) quoted a case in which party politics were recognised by the Crown; but the King knows no party, and never should know any party. And to use the machinery that belongs to the King for party purposes is, in my opinion, wrong.

Senator DUNCAN (New South Wales) [3.59].—I quite fail to understand the fulminations of Senators Lynch and Wilson. One would imagine, to hear them speak, that they came to the Senate as a result of the last elections entirely independent and without any brand on them whatever.

Senator WILSON.—Why take so small a view of the matter; why not take a bigger view?

Senator DUNCAN.—One would think that they came here without the indorsement of any political party, that they are here not so much because of the grace of God, the intelligence of the electors, or the fact that they were members of a political party, but because of some virtue inherent in themselves. I remember the last elections very well. I remember that Mr. Wilson, as the honorable senator was then, ran as a candidate in South Australia with the brand upon him of the National party, and the brand also of the Farmers party, and the honorable senator claimed that although he was not actually a member of it, he was still such a good chap that he might also have the brand of the Labour party. He was exceedingly well branded, and carried more brands about him than any other senator who was elected to this Chamber.

Senator WILSON.—The honorable senator makes out a good case to show the extent to which I enjoy the confidence of the electors.

Senator DUNCAN.—When the next election comes along at which Senator Wilson is a candidate, I do not think they will be asked to vote for "Wilson, the free and independent candidate, who stands hurling defiance at all parties." They will very possibly be asked to vote for "Wilson, the indorsed candidate of

the Farmers party and the National party," and any other party that the honorable senator can induce to brand him. I always listen to Senator Lynch with pleasure, but an honorable senator who is always railing so much against parties and against the attaching of party names to candidates should be consistent. We are all very glad to know that Senator Lynch has been returned again and again to this Chamber, not because he is Patrick Lynch, but because he has been the indorsed candidate of the party that has been able to secure the greatest measure of support in Western Australia.

Senator WILSON.—The honorable senator does not think that personality counts for anything.

Senator DUNCAN.—It does.

Senator WILSON.—It is because of personality that "Paddy" Lynch is here.

Senator DUNCAN.—It is because Senator Lynch possesses a remarkable personality that he has been able to secure the indorsement of his party.

Senator GARDINER.—Or because he possesses the capacity to skip from a party that is not very popular to one that is.

Senator DUNCAN.—I will not say that.

Senator GARDINER.—I have said it.

Senator DUNCAN.—The fact remains that practically all honorable senators who have spoken against this measure, and have told us what an evil thing party is, are staunch party men when they want a party to vote for them.

Senator RUSSELL.—Suppose there are three Nationalist candidates selected, and a fourth candidate desires to come out as a Nationalist, under this Bill it is proposed that he shall be put down as an "Independent Nationalist."

Senator DUNCAN.—And very properly so.

Senator RUSSELL.—That is tyranny.

Senator DUNCAN.—Senator Russell was selected as a Nationalist candidate at the last election, and he would not have been satisfied if some one else wished to join the Nationalist group. He would have insisted that he and the other two candidates were the only selected Nationalist candidates. There were independent candidates in Victoria and also in New South Wales.

Senator WILSON.—Some honorable senators have not enough independence to blow their hats off.

Senator DUNCAN.—Some boast of their independence in a way that does not cut any ice.

Senator RUSSELL.—If a candidate cannot run for election under any name he pleases, that is tyranny.

Senator DUNCAN.—We hear a great deal about the harm which will follow from the adoption of this proposal, but we know that every member of the Senate who seeks re-election will try to secure the indorsement of some political party, and that party will issue instructions to its supporters throughout the State.

Senator BOLTON.—Advice, not instructions.

Senator DUNCAN.—The parties will ask the electors to vote for their three selected candidates. "How-to-vote" cards will be issued to electors, and will be taken into the polling booth by them. Senators Lynch and Wilson have no objection to that. The elector will mark his ballot-paper in accordance with the "how-to-vote" card. Senator Lynch has always indorsed that. Everything is right up to that point, but the moment it is proposed that the names of candidates should be grouped together on the ballot-paper in the way provided in the Bill we are told that evil must follow.

Senator RUSSELL.—To put names on a ballot-paper in that way at present would lead to a prosecution.

Senator DUNCAN.—I know that. The proposed grouping will be of great assistance to the elector, and it should insure an intelligent vote. That is what we want. We cannot shut our eyes to the fact that parties exist. Where, then, is the harm in grouping candidates according to the parties under which they are nominated, and having their names placed in order under the group system? This principle will not remove the right of any elector to vote as he pleases, nor will it operate as an instruction that an elector must vote for the nominee of any organization. He will be entitled to vote just as he pleases, and to exercise the rights he enjoys to-day. At present, if an elector wishes to vote for all the candidates of his party he has, practically, to jump from top to bottom of the ballot-paper. The first man of his choice, as the nominee of his party, may be at the top of the ballot-paper, the second may be eighth or tenth on the list, and the third may be



number twenty in alphabetical order; and as some electors suffer from extreme nervousness in the ballot-box, it is probable that they find it difficult to remember and pick out the names of all candidates for whom they wish to vote. This proposed group system is the only solution of that difficulty, and if it violates any principle of electoral justice, it certainly is news to me. I cannot see that any harm will be done by its adoption. On the contrary, I think that it will be of very great assistance to electors, and if we adopt it, I believe we shall get a truer reflex of the desires of the majority of the electors than is possible under the present system.

**Senator DRAKE-BROCKMAN** (Western Australia) [4.8].—Technically, the debate may be pertinent to the issue; but actually it appears to me to be very wide of the mark. I have no desire to reflect too severely upon some of the remarks that have been made this afternoon; but I am afraid that the debate has not carried us very far towards the elucidation of the point at issue. The question is: Will the proposed alteration in the law assist or hinder the electors? All this talk about the indorsement of candidates and control by outside bodies is quite beside the mark. If I thought for a moment that any of the existing rights of an elector were to be taken away, interfered with, or destroyed, by this proposal, I would be as hot against it as any honorable senator in this chamber. But I cannot find in it anything that will interfere with the existing electoral privileges. The proposal to group candidates aims at giving information to electors which will enable them, more easily, perhaps, to give effect to their desires, and thus to determine more definitely who shall represent them in this chamber.

Senator Lynch gave us some interesting information yesterday. He pointed out that the number of informal votes cast at the last Senate election was in the vicinity of 180,000. This is very important, because only a few years ago a difference of 4,000 votes one way or the other throughout Australia would have altered very materially the complexion of representation in this chamber. I refer to the election when the Labour party carried all before them, and monopolized the seats in this House, on a majority, I

think, of about 8,000 votes over nominees of the Liberal party. Because there is such a large percentage of informal votes under the existing law, surely it is the duty of the Senate to try and simplify matters?

**Senator LYNCH**.—There were relative increases in number and percentages of informalities in the case of the other Chamber, for which the group system offers no cure.

**Senator DRAKE-BROCKMAN**.—At the last election the number of informal votes cast for candidates for the House of Representatives was about 70,000, and for this Chamber about 180,000, in the former case the invalid votes representing about 3 per cent. of the total number of votes cast, and in the case of the Senate election about 8 per cent. Therefore it is the duty of this Parliament to simplify the system of voting as much as possible, in the interests, not only of the electors, but of the Commonwealth, in order that this Parliament may be truly representative of the people. Anything we can do in that direction should be done. The mistakes at the ballot-box are made, not only by illiterate electors, but also by the educated section of the community, because, in many cases, they are not close students of political problems, and so it is desirable to do what is possible to simplify the working of our electoral machinery.

**Senator DE LARGIE** (Western Australia) [4.15].—I cannot understand why some honorable senators work themselves up into such a terrible state of indignation over such a simple proposition as the proposed grouping of candidates on the ballot-papers. There is nothing very serious about the proposal, but it will help to make our voting system clearer, and in that sense it will do a very great service. As Senator Drake-Brockman has remarked, mistakes are made by educated as well as by illiterate persons. I have in mind a case in point. At the first Federal election the candidate for the House of Representatives was Mr. Kirwan, the editor of the *Kalgoorlie Miner*, while I, also a resident of Kalgoorlie, was a candidate for the Senate. On one occasion the acting mayor of Kalgoorlie, a professional gentleman, and one who presided at political meetings,

asked me what I thought of my chances. When I replied that I thought that I had a very good chance, he said, "Look here, you are building upon false hopes. You cannot expect to beat Kirwan for the House of Representatives." This incident, I think, demonstrates that errors or mistakes are not confined to the illiterate, and as for bringing in the party machine, as has been suggested by Senator Wilson, I defy that honorable senator or Senator Lynch to point out in what way the proposal will aggravate party politics.

Senator WILSON.—What were your objections to the proposal a fortnight ago?

Senator DE LARGIE.—I do not understand what the honorable senator means.

Senator WILSON.—What were your objections only quite recently?

Senator DE LARGIE.—I was not aware that the Bill was before us a fortnight ago.

Senator WILSON.—But you remember whether you had objections or not.

Senator DE LARGIE.—I do. I have not changed my attitude. Senator Wilson, by interjection yesterday, insinuated that, when we had the measure before us in 1919, I was instrumental in defeating it. At the time I was not able to say definitely just what happened, but since then I have consulted *Hansard*, and I find that I did not even speak in support of the proposal then, and certainly did not vote for or against it, because the Minister withdrew the Bill. It did not go to a vote. Senator Wilson, by his insinuations is hardly playing the game.

Senator WILSON.—All right, I will deal with the matter a little later.

Senator DE LARGIE.—It is an easy matter, when an honorable senator is on his feet, for another honorable senator to put a difficult question about something that may have happened years ago, because it may be impossible for the honorable senator speaking to recollect exactly what happened, thus he may be placed in a false position.

Senator WILSON.—Do you say that I was anxious to put you in a false position yesterday?

Senator DE LARGIE.—I do not say that the honorable senator was anxious to do that, but the honorable senator's interjection certainly did put me in a false position, because I could not give a direct yes or no to his question.

Senator WILSON.—Did you not vote against the Bill last time, in order to get it thrown out?

Senator DE LARGIE.—That was impossible; the grouping clause did not go to a vote.

Senator WILSON.—I say it did.

Senator DE LARGIE.—According to *Hansard*, which I have consulted, it did not. The Minister withdrew it. In any case, the point is immaterial, and the proposal now before the Committee is not so fundamentally important that its rejection would be a terribly serious matter. I have said that I am in favour of the group system, because I think it will help to simplify the working of our electoral machinery. Of course, if there is a general desire not to clarify the operations of the electoral law, we can retain the ballot-paper in its present form. I cannot see that there can be very much objection to the amendment. We know what the fate of independent candidates has been. It has become a byword in Australia that the "independent" cannot be depended upon. That statement fits very well some of the so-called independent members that I have known.

Senator SENIOR.—The late Senator Thomas Playford and ex-Senator Josiah Symon contested elections for the Senate as independent candidates.

Senator DE LARGIE.—And they went down. They could not be depended upon. Even Senator Wilson is one of the most branded men in the Senate. Whether the provision is included in this measure or not will not matter very much; but I think there is a majority of the Senate in favour of it.

Senator LYNCH (Western Australia) [4.23].—I do not wish to monopolize the time of other honorable senators who wish to speak, but I rise for the purpose of again pointing out to Senator Drake-Brockman that when he referred to my figures one could gather no other lesson than that the preferential system had increased the number of informal votes. That is a necessary corollary, and a necessary inherent element in the system. The necessary increase in the numbers and percentages was practically the same for both Houses of Parliament. While we profess to apply a cure for this Chamber, we cannot even profess to do so for the other House, which is composed of members representing single-member constituencies.



Suppose there were five candidates belonging to five different parties in the Balclava electorate. Would it help the electors in the least if they were labelled or branded?

Senator GARLING.—Most materially.

Senator LYNCH.—Senator Garling's imagination must be particularly acute if he can hope to dispel the ignorance of the electors by saying that Brown is a Socialist, Smith a Nationalist, and So-and-So a Country party candidate. We are crediting the average elector with an amount of ignorance that I am sure he does not possess. It is quite plain that in single-member electorates the grouping system will not help the candidates, and proof of that contention is found in the fact that the Government have failed to introduce it. The preferential system must of necessity involve the casting of informal votes. It is a natural element of the system by reason of its complications. If Senator Drake-Brockman could guarantee that the 180,000 odd informal votes would be appreciably reduced, I would vote for the grouping system. I have to consider what is happening side by side with the necessity for reducing that vast number of informal votes. I have to consider what is going to happen to the independent candidates of this country.

Senator THOMAS.—Ah! What is going to happen?

Senator LYNCH.—I am sure that Senator Thomas, who has taken upon himself the worthy rôle of expressing an independent opinion in this Senate, will have some sympathy still with a man of independent mind. He is one of the political chain gang that is going to vote for a proposition to reduce the chance of an independent candidate in this country to a nullity. Senator Senior has mentioned the names of men who found their way to this Chamber because they were publicly recognised as independent. All honour to them. Surely we have not arrived at a time when we are going to so specially construct our legislation as to make it harder for the man of independent mind than for the branded man to get here. A man will be penalized for his independence. I challenge any honorable senator to deny that that will be the effect of the proposal. The Senate will not agree to it with my voice, or on my advice. Ex-Senator Trenwith arrived here as an independent senator. Was the Senate any the worse for his presence?

Taking it all in all, the circumstances that surrounded his arrival were in the nature of a tribute to our electoral system, and to the spirit abroad that was responsible for his return. Senator de Largie has spoken about "heat." I do not know whether he is referring to Senator Wilson or to me; but I would direct his attention to what Bacon said, "You cannot contend coldly for what you believe earnestly."

Senator THOMAS.—Hear, hear!

Senator LYNCH.—"Hear, hear," says Senator Thomas, who is going to put a leg-rope around the independent candidate. Senator Thomas has travelled abroad since he has been a member of this Parliament. If he met men in the market-place or the public haunts of men where high politics is talked, what answer would he give to the question, "What are you?" He would say, "I am a member of the Federal Senate." He would be asked, "Whom do you represent?" Would it occur to his mind to say, "I am a member of the National party, or a branded party"? Not at all. I venture to say that his first thought would be, "I represent New South Wales in the Federal Senate." Every man-jack of us would say the same. We would say that we represent the particular State from which we come. The proposal before the Senate is to put the State beneath the party status of the individual. Ought we not to be ashamed of ourselves for introducing this for the first time into our electoral legislation?

Senator WILSON.—This is the second time.

Senator LYNCH.—It was beaten in a most humiliating way last time. Are we to stain the pages of our electoral law by recognising the party system? I realize that the party system is an indispensable evil in our political life; but, while we cannot abolish it, that is no reason why we should encourage it. We shall be encouraging it if we put upon it the imprimatur, not only of Parliament, but also of the Government and the people of the Commonwealth. Consider the ballot-paper, for instance. The letters A. B. C. would be only camouflage. The system should be called by its proper name. It is the Yankee ticket system, which, as I have already said, on the authority of Viscount

Bryce, has been scrapped in the United States of America. If not scrapped, it is regarded with such odium that no decent-minded man will associate with it.

Senator DRAKE-BROCKMAN.—The Bill does not propose to introduce the American system.

Senator LYNCH.—The “t’s” may not be crossed or the “i’s” dotted, but it is really the same system. If Senator Thomas, in reply to questions abroad, said he did not represent New South Wales, but represented the National party, he would be asked, “Who is the National party?” “Where do they come from?” He is intending now to affix his name to a proposition that will lower the status of this Chamber. That is what I am so anxious to guard against. I do not want this Chamber to be made the brawling cockpit of political advocates or votaries. I want this Chamber to be retained true to name and type—a States’ House, composed of States’ representatives, without any distinctive qualifications, political or otherwise. As for independent candidates, I am afraid that we are allowing the proposal to go through too hurriedly. I asked what would become of a citizen of this country who wanted to include himself in a group, and I had the answer “Yes, he could” from one quarter and “No” from the Ministerial side of the chamber. Let us suppose that a political party selects three men, and that an attache of that party says, “I wish to stand also.” Suppose the fourth man wants to be included in the party, who is to be the arbitrator in his case?

Senator DRAKE-BROCKMAN.—The other candidates.

Senator LYNCH.—We are getting enlightenment now. The political freedom of the fourth man will depend upon the whim or choice of the other three, who naturally want to shut out all competition with themselves. The Ministerial bench is silent; it does not answer my question; it will not speak for love nor money. I am getting advice from all round the chamber, but not from that quarter. Honorable senators should not be led into experimental by-paths, and be induced to adopt a rejected Yankee notion. Are we to say that in future no man of independent opinions will ever arise on the political horizon? When an

independent candidate does come forward in the future, as he has done in the past, where will he find himself?

Senator GARLING.—On the ballot-paper.

Senator LYNCH.—And at the bottom of the paper, too.

Senator WILSON.—If this proposal is carried, the independent candidate will have no hope of being returned.

Senator LYNCH.—Quite so. There is a proposal somewhere in the Bill that the names of candidates in groups are to take precedence. If, for instance, my friend Senator Wilson stands as an independent candidate, his name will be somewhere near the bottom of the list, because the initial letter of his surname is one of the last letters of the alphabet. But another candidate, who happens to be one of a group, may have the same initial letter, and yet find himself in the top group.

Senator GARDINER (New South Wales) [4.39].—I was rather surprised at the figures quoted by Senator Lynch. He suggested that the voters of Western Australia showed superior intelligence because they recorded fewer informal votes than were cast in other States. Western Australia has only a few voters, and the ballot-paper there would probably have not more than half-a-dozen names. How many candidates were there at the last Senate election?

Senator LYNCH.—Eight.

Senator GARDINER.—Contrast that with the position in New South Wales, where the voter would have to choose between, perhaps, eighteen candidates. Obviously, the ballot-paper containing the larger number of names would be more confusing to the elector. There were a number of groups among the candidates in New South Wales at the last election.

Senator VARDON.—Did you have to number all the candidates?

Senator GARDINER.—No. But it was necessary to number at least seven of them correctly. The elector had the right to vote the full ticket, and even if he had had seven correct, but had made a mistake with the fourteenth, his vote would have been informal. No comparison between Western Australia and New South Wales can be used as a reasonable argument that the proposed system would bring about more informal votes than the



existing one. I am surprised at the contemptuous manner of Senator Lynch in referring to "Yankee Land." It is not altogether what one would expect from a man with the dignity and intelligence of the honorable senator. I think the mighty American Republic should be referred to in language worthy of that nation and worthy of the honorable senator.

Senator LYNCH.—Of course, you have never heard of "Yankee Doodle"!

Senator GARDINER.—The honorable senator must recognise that his reference to that great Republic was out of place. The party ticket in vogue in the United States of America is not similar to our ballot system, so why compare things that are different?

Senator LYNCH.—Will you explain the distinction between this so-called group system and the American ticket system?

Senator GARDINER.—There is no similarity. Senator Lynch has pointed out the inequality in the numbers of informal votes in connexion with the elections for the Senate and House of Representatives respectively. I would remind him that in numbers of contests for the House of Representatives there are only two candidates, and the electors have only two votes to cast. I favour the grouping system, and if we accept the present proposal there will be nothing on the ballot-paper to indicate the name of any party.

Senator LYNCH.—Where would you put the independent candidates?

Senator GARDINER.—After his attack on the party system, I must assume that Senator Lynch will run as an independent candidate at the next election. Owing to his intellectual qualities, this high-minded man, who is too big for parties, will be afraid that he may be placed at the bottom of the ballot-paper. I give him this advice: He should run with another independent candidate in Western Australia, equal in intelligence and capacity to himself, but he should choose a man with the name, preferably, of "Aaron." Then I think the initial letters of "Aaron" would place that gentleman and Senator Lynch near the top of the list. The proposed ballot-paper would simply have the letters "A," "B," "C," "D," &c., for as many parties as were in the field. Certainly it would mean an alteration of the ballot-paper. Senator Vardon, of course, owing to his

initial being near the end of the alphabet, would find himself near the bottom of the list, but the proposal would do no more injury to candidates than is done under the present system.

Senator PAYNE (Tasmania) [4.48].—I do not know of any proposed legislation that needs closer scrutiny than suggested alterations of the Electoral Act, which controls entirely the representation of the people in the two Houses. Therefore, any proposal to drastically amend the provisions of this Statute should be considered with the utmost care. Unfortunately, through no fault of my own, I was absent from the chamber during the debate on the second reading of this Bill, but since my return to Melbourne I have endeavoured to make myself acquainted with the arguments put forward by the Minister for Home and Territories (Senator Pearce), who introduced the measure. The more alterations we effect in the system of voting the more difficult we make it for the electors to record an intelligent vote at the ballot-box. Whenever an alteration has been made, we have found that the people have been confronted with difficulties not previously experienced. During the last election a new method was adopted in relation to the Senate elections, and people are looking forward to its continuance. It is now proposed that a ballot-paper shall contain the names of the candidates grouped in parties, although there will be no indication on the paper as to which parties the groups represent. The explanation given by the Minister is that the grouping system will insure a more intelligent vote being recorded, but with that contention I do not agree. A great majority of electors know exactly how they intend to vote when they reach the polling booth; but there are others who do not, and consequently they will have to rely on the daily newspapers for their guidance. The newspapers have never been behind in indicating the parties to which the different candidates belong, and the political organizations also see that every elector is furnished with a list of the candidates representing a particular organization. Consequently, everything is done to see that the elector has every opportunity of ascertaining to which party each candidate is attached, and the proposal submitted and accepted by the Minister will not make the ballot-paper

any easier to understand. But the greatest objection to the proposal is the exclusion from the groups of some candidates capable of serving their country with equal ability, and who would in all probability have gained the confidence of the people in ordinary circumstances. If they are excluded by an organization which holds a pre-selection ballot, we are not giving the electors that reasonable choice that is due to them.

Senator CRAWFORD.—An organization never indorses the candidature of four when there are only three vacancies.

Senator PAYNE.—I know that in one State there were a dozen ardent, earnest Nationalists whose names were accepted, and indorsed by the organization.

Senator DE LARGIE.—For the Senate?

Senator PAYNE.—Yes.

Senator DE LARGIE.—There were four vacancies in that instance.

Senator PAYNE.—Under the present system of voting, provided the electors vote the party ticket, it does not matter how many candidates are in the field. I have carefully perused the amendment submitted, from which it would appear possible for any candidate to have his name included in a group if he notifies the Returning Officer of his desire to be included, but on comparing the amendment with a later portion of the Bill I find that that would be practically impossible.

Senator SENIOR.—To what portion is the honorable senator referring?

Senator PAYNE.—Those provisions which set out the position in which the various groups will appear upon the ballot-paper. Let us suppose that Jones, Brown, and Robertson had formed a group in the Nationalist interests, and I also desired to stand as a Nationalist candidate. How could I secure the information from the Returning Officer that Brown, Jones, and Robertson had formed a group?

Senator DUNCAN.—The honorable senator could not unless he was in it.

Senator PAYNE.—Of course not, and it means that a candidate belonging to the same organization who feels that he has as much ability to represent a State as any of the other candidates will not have the opportunity of being included in a group. In such circumstances, a candidate would not be able to secure the

same support from the electors as one who is in the group, because his name being on another portion of the ballot-paper will suggest that he has not been approved by the organization to which he belongs. That is not giving candidates a fair deal. The electors should be given a free choice in regard to the selection of candidates to represent them in this Chamber, and if their rights are curtailed it will not be in the interests of good government. After all, we must recognise that the electors are the masters of the situation, and we have to abide by their decisions. There is quite a number of illiterate electors, so far as political ideals are concerned, and there is also a number of educated men, business men particularly, whose political ideas are confined entirely to their own personal interests. During the last election campaign, I heard a prominent business man openly admit that he had taken a ballot-paper and marked all the names from top to bottom, because he was heartily tired of elections. With men of that type voting, the group system will not insure the recording of intelligent votes.

Senator VARDON.—Fortunately there are not many like that.

Senator PAYNE.—There are a good many, and I believe it would be prejudicial to the interests of this Chamber to adopt the grouping system. The last elections proved very satisfactory from the standpoint of the party to which I belong, and as a majority of the people decided that the Nationalist party should govern, why should there be any necessity to alter the system?

Senator VARDON.—There were 179,000 informal votes.

Senator PAYNE.—If I could be convinced that any effort that is being made would result in decreasing the number of informal votes, I would not oppose the system; but I believe that this proposal, if adopted, will not be the means of decreasing the number. By adopting the method suggested in the amendment we will not be simplifying the position, and in the interests of the Government and of the Commonwealth I oppose the amendment moved by Senator Garling.

Senator FAIRBAIRN (Victoria) [4.59].—It is unreasonable to deny the



fact that political party machinery plays an important part in our elections. The Labour party has one of the finest political machines in the world, and it would be absurd to suggest that that party could be fought without the assistance of a well-organized political machine. The Labour party has pre-selection ballots, Caucus meetings, and its selected members have to sign a pledge.

Senator GARDINER.—And the organization of which the honorable senator is a member copies and improves everything we adopt.

Senator FAIRBAIRN.—We have been driven into it, because the Labour party is organized and armed to the teeth. During my political career I have found that if I had not a strong political organization behind me I would not have been elected, particularly to the Senate. The voting for this Chamber is to a great extent on the ticket system, and to suggest that the electors know every candidate would be perfectly absurd. During my experience I have found that the electors have to be informed right up to the election day of the names of the candidates for whom they are to vote, and the womenfolk even carry the names into the booths on a slip of paper concealed in their gloves. I fought one election and was beaten, although I had splendid meetings. There were 46,000 electors in the electorate, and when the contest was over I said to my secretary, who was a particularly able man, that I must have addressed at least 20,000 of that number. He informed me, however, that he had kept a very careful note of the attendances, and that I had not addressed more than 2,000. It was somewhat depressing to realize that such a small number had taken the trouble to leave their work and amusement to hear what I had to say. Great credit is due to those who sacrifice their personal interests to serve on party committees, and who devote a good deal of time in attending meetings, studying the possibilities of candidates, and listening to dreary speeches. The grouping system which is incorporated in this measure is an excellent one, and will provide electors who do not wish to go into details with the information which they require. The organizers for the Labour party are, I think, more enthusiastic than any others.

Senator GARDINER.—And you have more money to pay yours for their enthusiasm.

Senator FAIRBAIRN.—That is not so, and if the secret history of the Labour party were disclosed it would be found that that party has at its disposal ten times more money than we have. The supporters of Labour have always said that we have large sums of money at our command for political purposes, but those who were once in the Labour ranks and who are now on our side have changed their opinion. On one occasion I was assisted by Mr. Agar Wynne and the late Sir Simon Fraser in collecting funds for a Victorian campaign, and we raised only £5,000, which is a very small amount when compared with the millions raised by the Labour party. Naturally the Labour party won that election. But I do not say that money had much to do with it. I do not believe that there is direct bribery on either side. Some money must be spent in the conduct of elections, and, in my view, it is the duty of a man to contribute a certain amount of money to the political organization to which he belongs in order that it may be in a position to put the political situation before the electors in such a way as to enable them to form an intelligent opinion. I do not regard the spending of money in that way as bribery and corruption. I hope that the grouping system will be adopted because it is what the electors desire, and will make matters much more simple for them on election day.

Senator VARDON (South Australia) [5.6].—I have already said that I intend to vote for the grouping system as indicated in this clause. The percentages of informal votes cast at the last two elections are certainly instructive. In 1917 the percentage was 3, and in the election of 1919 it had increased to 8.8 per cent., or nearly three times. The lower percentage in 1917 is probably accounted for by the fact that at that election the ballot-papers had to be marked with a cross in front of the name of the candidate for whom the elector intended to vote, in accordance with the practice which had been in force for a very long time. The election in 1919 was conducted on a new system of marking the ballot-papers, and probably the great

number of names that were placed in front of the electors was responsible for a great many of the informal votes. Senator Lynch has said that in this clause we are doing something to assist the Senate elector, and not the elector for the House of Representatives. That is so; but the elector for the House of Representatives does not require to be assisted in this way. That is proved by the figures of informal votes for elections for the two Houses. At the last election the percentage of informal votes for the House of Representatives was only 3.6, whilst the percentage for the Senate was 8.8. The system of grouping will not do an injustice to any candidate or any party, but it will help the elector in making his choice.

A great deal has been said about placing the names of independents at the bottom of the ballot-paper. As Senator Gardiner has pointed out, I have, through no fault of my own, had my name appearing at the bottom of the ballot-paper at practically every election. It has seemed to me that that is hardly fair, and that if our system were not being altered as now proposed, it would have been wise to provide that candidates should ballot for the order in which their names shall appear on the ballot-paper. I hope the clause will be carried. I intend to vote for it.

Senator SENIOR (South Australia) [5.10].—There is one reason for the increase in the number of informal votes which so far has not been mentioned. It is possible for an elector, under the existing system, to mark a ballot-paper in such a way as to record votes for three candidates and yet record an informal vote. The elector is at present required to vote for a sufficient number of candidates to fill the vacancies to be filled, plus one. He may vote for two candidates who are subsequently returned, and give his third vote for a candidate who has no chance, and his ballot-paper is rejected as informal. I contend that the wish of the elector, as indicated by his vote, should be given effect. There are practically three separate elections in the case of an election for the Senate provided for on one ballot-paper, and the elector's votes for the candidates for whom he has voted should be regarded as formal. Ballot-papers have been rejected because of a technical informality

which was not, in my opinion, a real informality. In filling the first vacancy and counting and distributing votes, it is often found that for the first two candidates there is a distinct indication of the wish of the elector. Under the old practice, if an elector distinctly marked his intention on the ballot-paper it was given effect to, and if it had been possible under the existing system to give effect in every instance to the wish indicated by the elector, a number of ballot-papers that were rejected as informal would not have been rejected, because they were perfectly valid for, perhaps, two out of three candidates. I do not yet see how the difficulty is to be overcome, but possibly the officers of the Department may be able to guide us in the matter, and in the multitude of statutory rules may suggest one that will meet the difficulty.

Senator DUNCAN.—It is very dangerous. It opens the way to plumping.

Senator SENIOR.—No, it does not. Suppose an elector indicates his first two preferences for candidates who are subsequently returned, and his third for one who is not in the running.

Senator PEARCE.—That will not affect the validity of his vote. The test is, does he give the right number of votes? He must vote for candidates sufficient to fill double the number of vacancies, plus one.

Senator SENIOR.—I think we should meet this difficulty in some way or another, because, when the electors have indicated their preference for three candidates, they believe they have voted for three persons to fill the three vacancies, and that they have therefore done their duty. I have gone carefully through lists in South Australia, and have found that the percentage of informal votes varies in different divisions and subdivisions. It will be found that it is not ignorance nor education that determines the matter, but where electors are most easily organized there are fewer informal votes. In my opinion it is not right that, where two men out of three receive a vote that would be valid if the election for the Senate were regarded as an election for a single electorate of the House of Representatives, they should be deprived of the votes recorded for them because of a technical informality in the indication of the voter's preference for other candidates.



Senator WILSON (South Australia) [5.14].—I would not have spoken again on the clause, but I wish to reply to some remarks that have fallen from other honorable senators. Senator Drake-Brockman has said that the effect of this clause will be to simplify the ballot. I think that it will complicate the ballot very seriously. An honorable senator has only to put fourteen or fifteen names on a list, and group them, and he will have to admit that this proposal must complicate voting very seriously, except for those who intend to give an absolute block party vote.

Senator GARDINER.—And they represent nine-tenths of the community.

Senator WILSON.—I have already said that 50 per cent. of the electors are not party electors.

Senator FAIRBAIRN.—Fifteen per cent.

Senator WILSON.—The official figures show that over 50 per cent. of the electors are not directly connected with any party organization.

Senator DUNCAN.—I do not think there was one independent candidate at the last election who received anywhere near 50 per cent. of the votes polled for successful candidates.

Senator WILSON.—Because a man records a block vote on occasion, that is not to say that he is a party man. When I speak of party electors, I refer to members of political associations or parties, and a very great many of the electors are not members of any political organization.

In speaking previously, I said most emphatically that Senator de Largie did assist to defeat a proposal similar to this three years ago. Many other honorable senators have held a similar view until quite recently. Yesterday Senator de Largie accused me of everlastingly introducing the personal note in this Chamber. I say the honorable senator's statement was inaccurate and entirely uncalled for. I may have, unfortunately, a forcible way of putting my arguments, but I have refrained as much as any honorable senator can from being personal. If, to quote what an honorable senator may have said or done on a previous occasion is to be regarded as introducing a personal matter, the limits of debate in this Chamber will be very seriously confined. An Electoral Bill was introduced in the Senate in 1919, and honorable sena-

tors will find the following at page 13443 of *Hansard* for 16th October of that year:—

Senator RUSSELL (Victoria—Vice-President of the Executive Council and Acting Minister for Defence).—I move—

That the schedule be further amended by leaving out the letters "A," "B," and "C" before the names of the candidates, and the footnote.

The object is to do away with the grouping system. The Bill is not a party measure, and I regret that we have to do this. However, I recognise that it is the wish of the Senate, and I yield as gracefully as possible to the majority.

It is true that Senator de Largie did not speak on that motion, but I find that he was a teller in the division that took place upon it. The motion was carried by fifteen Ayes to eight Noes.

Senator PEARCE.—That division was not on the grouping principle.

Senator WILSON.—It was on the question that the group system be withdrawn, and I find that the only members supporting it, outside of ex-Senator Shannon, were Labour men and ex-Labour men.

Senator PEARCE.—The division was on quite a different question.

Senator RUSSELL.—I had discretion, because the numbers were against me.

Senator WILSON.—If a Minister exercises discretion when the numbers are against him, it ceases to be discretion. The Minister had no chance of carrying the proposal then, and I repeat that the vote was as to whether the letters "A," "B," and "C," that is, the group system, should be deleted.

Senator DE LARGIE.—What were the circumstances of that debate? Can the honorable senator say?

Senator WILSON.—The division was on the question whether the group system should stand or not.

Senator PEARCE.—The honorable senator is wrong.

Senator WILSON.—The *Hansard* record is as clear as it is possible to be. What may have been unforeseen and what did not take place in this Chamber finds no record in *Hansard*, and, therefore, I am not concerned about that.

Senator PEARCE.—If the honorable senator has arrived at that conclusion, all I can say is that he has not read the debate, and I advise him to do so.

Senator WILSON.—I have read it. Is it necessary to go through the whole of Senator Russell's statement?

Senator PEARCE.—You want to go back to what took place prior to that division.

Senator WILSON.—I should not be called upon to go delving into prior records for this information. Senator Russell is here, and can speak for himself. If I have misled the Committee, I leave it to Senator Russell. The vote was taken on the question of the group system, and it was rejected.

Senator GARDINER.—The Government changed their minds because their party was leading them.

Senator PLAIN.—I think there was some misunderstanding about that division.

Senator WILSON.—Probably there was, and that is one reason why I have not stressed the significance of the names in the division list. I have no desire to be unfair. I contend that Senator de Largie was against the group system then, and until recently was of the same mind; with him his advocacy now is in the nature of a death-bed repentance.

Senator DE LARGIE.—Nothing of the kind. I defy you to quote a single utterance of mine to show that I was against the group system in 1919.

Senator WILSON.—I think I will leave that for other honorable senators.

Senator DE LARGIE.—But you should do your own work. You are making the accusation.

Senator WILSON.—I am quite capable of doing by own work, and I repeat that until recently Senator de Largie was against the group system.

Senator DE LARGIE.—And I say that you are absolutely incorrect.

Senator WILSON.—I shall allow other honorable senators to be the judges in this matter. I have no intention of delaying the Senate. I think I have made myself quite clear. I am opposed to the proposal, because it is a very serious step for the Senate to take. The objections raised on the former occasion stand to-day. Surely Senator Earle has not changed his position. This proposal will introduce party politics into the ballot-box, and attempt to force people, per medium of legislation, into one or other of two parties. Senator Lynch quite properly drew attention to the position in which a fourth man might be placed if, without the indorsement of his party, he attempted to get into a team for the Senate elections, and I want to

put the issue in a personal way in order to make it effective. Let us suppose, for instance, that my friends Senators Newland and Benny are candidates for the next election, and agree that they will not have me as a third man in the team. What will be my position? Are we going to allow two candidates to determine a question like that?

Senator LYNCH.—The group system will absolutely limit the choice of the electors.

Senator WILSON.—It will limit it to such an extent that unless a man is in one or other of the groups he will not have a dog's chance of election. Senator Duncan, in his forcible manner, suggested that I will be a party man at the next election. It is not for him or any one else to say what I shall be when next I face the electors, but I can say that since I have been in this Chamber I have endeavoured always to do what I believe to be the right thing.

Senator DUNCAN.—And you have done it very well.

Senator WILSON.—I have tried to, at all events. I am opposing the group system because I believe that an important principle is at stake. The electors themselves, and not some party outside, should have a right to determine whether a man shall represent them or not. I hope, therefore, that the Committee will reject the proposal.

Senator PEARCE (Western Australia—Minister for Home and Territories) [5.38].—I find it hard to believe that Senator Wilson has read the debate on this question when the Bill was before the Committee in 1919. If he has done so, I am at a loss to understand why he should attempt to mislead the Committee.

Senator DE LARGIE.—He has done it deliberately.

Senator WILSON.—I have not done so.

Senator PEARCE.—I must assume, then, that the honorable senator has not intentionally done so, but the debate in *Hansard* of 16th October, 1919, page 13444, is quite clear. Senator Russell had introduced the group system in a Bill which he advocated, and the matter not being treated as a party question, opinions were divided. Senator de Largie did not speak to the Bill. A number of members supporting the Minister spoke in favour of the measure, and some, including Senators Bakhap and Lynch, against it. Senator



Newland spoke strongly in its favour. Senator Russell obtained leave to withdraw the proposal, and subsequently he moved—

That all the words after "*Candidates*" be left out with a view to inserting the following:—

Then appear the names of candidates on a ballot-paper in alphabetical order, the Minister explaining that, since submitting his previous amendment, he had discovered that the specimen ballot-paper had not been arranged in alphabetical order. The division took place on Senator Russell's amendment for a re-arrangement of the ballot-paper to correct the mistake referred to.

Senator WILSON.—The division was on whether the grouping of candidates in "A," "B," and "C" should be left out.

Senator PEARCE.—The honorable senator is quite wrong. The division may be found on page 13448. No motion intervened, and, therefore, the vote was on Senator Russell's amendment for a re-arrangement of the ballot-paper to correct a mistake which appeared in the first specimen ballot-paper submitted.

Senator GARDINER.—The ballot-paper was not in alphabetical order because it provided for the group system.

Senator PEARCE.—Senator Russell had already withdrawn the proposal and had, of course, to submit something in its place. Senator Newland said that he was entirely at a loss to understand what had persuaded the Minister to depart from the grouping system, of which he (Senator Newland) cordially approved, and of course he was found voting against the Minister. If honorable senators peruse the debate they will find that the division was not on the question of the group system at all.

Senator LYNCH.—But it is correct to say that the group system was not adopted by the Senate.

Senator PEARCE.—It was withdrawn.

Senator LYNCH.—Because that was the sense of the Senate at the time.

Senator PEARCE.—The Minister in charge of the Bill thought it was. He believed there was a majority against him, but *Hansard* contains no record of that majority.

I turn now to remarks made by Senators Lynch and Wilson. They both seem to attach undue importance to the probable effect of the group system, and

Senator Lynch in particular appears to have some regard for a man who, not being a nominee of a party, may find himself in what he terms the "dust bin," that is to say, at the bottom of the ballot-paper. I do not remember receiving Senator Lynch's sympathy when I was in the "dust bin," as he terms it, at the last general election.

Senator LYNCH.—I advised everybody to put you first, in front of myself.

Senator PEARCE.—I have here a specimen of the Senate ballot-paper for the last Federal elections in Western Australia. The names appeared in the following order:—

Drake-Brockman,  
Gorman,  
Graham,  
Lynch,  
Needham,  
Pearce.

According to Senator Lynch, I was under some terrible disability because I was at the bottom of the list. If there is any grouping on that ballot-paper, it is the grouping of Drake-Brockman, Gorman, and Graham. Senator Lynch has no objection to such grouping. It is proposed in the Bill that the ballot-paper shall read Drake-Brockman, Lynch, Pearce, Gorman, Graham, Needham. Some of them would have the letter "A" in front of their names. Where is the terrible trap for the unwary elector in that arrangement? Where is the serious injury? Suppose Senator Wilson were there as an independent candidate. What terrible fate would befall him? His fate would be that which has befallen him at practically every election. His name would be placed below all the other names. That, however, has been going on for years, and no one has shed tears for Senator Vardon, Senator Wilson, or myself. A proposal is now put forward to get away from this accidental placing of the position of the names on the list. The accident of the first letter of his name determines the position of a candidate on the ballot-paper, but that is considered to be no injustice. Why should we humbug ourselves? We know very well that the great majority of the electors of this country want to vote for a party. It is not that they put a party above the State, but that they believe that their party is going to serve the interests of the State best. That is why it is not logical to say that because one

believes in a party one is therefore against the State. If we did not consider that our party was for the advantage of the State, we would not support it.

Senator LYNCH.—What did party influence count for in the war?

Senator PEARCE.—I will explain to the honorable senator what party influence counted for in the war. Party influence stood in the way of what certain honorable senators conceived to be their duty, and they left their party; but they had no sooner left it than they saw at once that if the cause for which they stood was to survive, they must have a party to advocate and uphold it. Soon after their departure from the party which stood between them and their duty to their country, they associated themselves with a party which enabled them to express themselves with force and power in this country. It is certain that if Senator Lynch, myself, and others who left our party at that time, conscientiously believing that to be the right course to follow, had not taken subsequent action to associate ourselves with another party, the party we had left would have had control of this country during and after the war. We cannot fight unity with disunity, nor organization with disorganization. Therefore we are only humbugging ourselves when we shut our eyes to the fact that the great bulk of the electors of this country want to express themselves through party organizations.

Senator LYNCH.—I was dealing with the independent, or unbranded, candidate who finds himself at the tail end of the list.

Senator PEARCE.—The independent candidate will be in no worse, and no better, position than those of us who, by an accident, have at the beginning of our names a letter which is near the end of the alphabet. Senator Vardon, Senator Wilson, and myself have managed, notwithstanding that disability, to win seats in the Senate, and to remain here over a period of years. Our presence is an indication that the new system of placing names on the ballot-paper will not be a disadvantage to a man who, because of personal qualifications, and notwithstanding the fact that he has no party at his back, is able to earn the confidence, good-will, and votes of the electors of this country.

Senator LYNCH.—If the Minister's argument is sound, why is an ingenious

device resorted to for arriving at the order or sequence in which the parties shall appear on the ballot-paper?

Senator PEARCE.—My reply is the Western Australian ballot-paper. There is more reason why the names of Drake-Brockman, Lynch, and Pearce should follow each other than that Gorman and Graham should follow Drake-Brockman. They follow each other now because they happen to be accidentally the next in alphabetical sequence. In the electors' eyes and the electors' opinion, there is more association between Drake-Brockman, Lynch, and myself than there is between Drake-Brockman, Gorman, and Graham. Therefore, the proposal will meet the convenience of the electors, and will assist them to arrive at the judgment they desire. The arguments that have been used against the group system can be employed with equal effect against the alphabetical system. If those arguments are sound, we ought not to continue the alphabetical system, but should ballot for positions on the ballot-paper.

Senator GARLING (New South Wales) [5.42].—My attitude towards this part of the Bill is that of a man who sees the necessity for clarifying the issues before the electors. This "tinkering," as it has been called, with the electoral law is only a process of experimentation. We have not reached such a perfect stage that we can say we have no need for experiment. I do not agree with those honorable senators who have criticised members because they have departed to-day from the attitude they took up three years ago. They have changed their views because experience has shown that it is necessary to clarify the issues before the electors.

Senator WILSON.—Did not I admit that most freely when I was speaking?

Senator GARLING. — Perhaps the honorable senator did. I was not referring particularly to him, for more than he have referred to the attitude of others. I think I may fairly state what my experience was during the last election to indicate how essential it is that the candidates representing a certain policy should, as far as possible, be collected together, so that the electors may not make a mistake. My statement may be contradicted. I ran fourth in the final result, and was defeated. When the elections were over, the party to which I belonged had a scrutiny made of many thousands of the ballot-papers to see



whether they could find anything to indicate why Senators Cox and Duncan, who were numbered 1 and 2, and Garling, who was numbered 3, were not all elected together. They found thousands of instances in which electors voted 1 for Cox, 2 for Duncan, and 3 for Gardiner. I would not think much of that had I followed somewhere near; but the examination further disclosed that after the name of Gardiner appeared a number of names of candidates who were what we might term the "also-rans." My name was finally bracketed at the bottom of the list with ex-Senators Grant and McDougall, who were the other candidates in the Labour interest. Had a few only made that mistake one would not have thought much of it, but when it is found—and I am able to support this statement by the testimony of the men who made the scrutiny—that thousands voted in that fashion, one can only come to the conclusion that the electors were not sufficiently educated regarding the personality of the candidates, and that they mistook the name of Gardiner for Garling. In instances like this we ought to do all we can to enable the electors to cast their votes as they intend to cast them. The system of grouping will in my opinion assist them. Who can say that it will give any violent twist to our electoral system, or that any attempt is being made to bring in anything pernicious? I would not vote for the proposal if I did not believe that it would be a step in the direction of clarifying the issues before the people. If it were merely a matter of party, of seeking to get a party stranglehold on the politics of this country, I would not favour it; but anything that we can do we should do to clear the issues before the electors, to make plain to them the duty before them, and to acquaint them with the *personnel* of the men who have been nominated to support different issues and policies that the electors believe in.

**Senator DE LARGIE** (Western Australia) [5.47].—I would not have spoken again but for the fact that an honorable senator placed in a false position must continue to correct statements that are incorrect until he has made his position quite clear. When speaking yesterday on the second reading of the Bill, and when referring to the grouping system, I

was challenged by Senator Wilson as to whether I was not responsible for the defeat of the proposition when it was before the Senate on a previous occasion. Being challenged when I was on my feet, I could not give a definite denial, but I said I did not think so. I could not remember whether a division had been taken, but I knew my general attitude on the question. I knew that I was in favour of grouping. I gave a qualified denial. I think most honorable senators, if not all, with the exception of Senator Wilson, would have accepted my denial, but he would not accept it. Apparently he pored over it all night, and carried it about with him until he spoke again to-day. When he was speaking to-day I again denied the incorrect statement. That, however, did not satisfy him. He said he had read it in *Hansard*, and was going to make a great exposure of me. When an honorable senator conducts himself in that manner, and will not accept the statement of another honorable senator when he is wrong, it is necessary to repeat the denial. Undoubtedly he was wrong in saying that I was responsible for the defeat of the proposal. There was no division upon it. Constant repetition of a statement that is inaccurate will not raise any honorable senator in the estimation of the members of this Chamber. He refused to accept my statement that I did not vote or speak against it, or do anything to defeat it. When a public man keeps repeating an inaccurate statement, and tries to ram it down one's throat, he fails to command respect, and in future I do not intend taking notice of anything he may say.

**Senator GARDINER** (New South Wales) [5.52].—Senator Wilson cannot be accused of unfairly quoting what *Hansard* records.

**Senator WILSON**.—If Senator Russell speaks, he will be "potted."

**Senator GARDINER**.—According to the Minister's speech, the reason for the withdrawal of the grouping system previously was the objection of the Government following to it. Senator Garling has made the extraordinary statement that his party, after the election, had access to the ballot-papers, examined them, and worked out how the votes had been cast.

Senator RUSSELL.—And found thousands of votes for "Gardiner."

Senator GARDINER.—I am not troubled as to how the voting went. Despite all the "millions" the Labour party possessed, it never had enough money to get access to ballot-papers.

Senator PEARCE.—Senator Garling referred to the information given to him by the scrutineers, who saw the count.

Senator GARDINER.—No. He said that they were permitted to examine the ballot-papers. Of course, it shocks the Minister. It would shock anybody to hear such a thing.

Senator PEARCE.—He cannot have meant that.

Senator GARDINER.—Not only did he mean it, but I know that it is a fact.

Senator PEARCE.—I would like to hear Senator Garling on that.

Senator GARDINER.—When it was notified that there was to be a vacancy, I asked the Minister in charge of the administration of the Electoral Act to conduct a scrutiny.

Senator PEARCE.—I think Senator Garling should reply to that.

Senator GARLING (New South Wales) [5.55].—I got my information, of course, from the Association, that there had been a scrutiny of the ballot-papers. How it was made, I do not know. I assume that it was done during the counting after the election. The counting took some weeks.

Senator DE LARGIE.—It must be made immediately after the election, in accordance with the Act.

Senator GARLING.—It was made by the men who were scrutineering at the election.

Senator LYNCH.—That takes place at every election.

Senator PEARCE.—That is a different thing altogether.

Senator GARLING.—It is three years since this happened, but that was the information furnished to the Association.

Senator PEARCE.—By whom?

Senator GARLING.—By the scrutineers.

Senator GARDINER (New South Wales) [5.56].—I can quite understand that, when a statement is made publicly

that even a Minister cannot defend, it comes as a shock to know that the Nationalist organization in New South Wales, after the election was over, and after the scrutiny had been made, had access to the ballot-papers in that State, with a view to seeing how the votes had been cast. That is exactly what took place.

Senator PEARCE.—No.

Senator GARDINER.—Let the Minister read the proof to-morrow of Senator Garling's speech, and then he will know, as the Nationalist members from New South Wales already know, that their party did make a scrutiny of the ballot-papers.

Senator PEARCE.—After the election?

Senator GARDINER.—Yes.

Senator GARLING.—I said that, after the election, there was a scrutiny; but I do not know just at what period it took place.

The CHAIRMAN (Senator Bakhap).—I cannot allow a discussion on a question of a problematical nature. While I wish to afford to honorable senators fair latitude, I cannot permit this discussion to be enlarged into a general debate as to what was done at a scrutiny in New South Wales.

Senator GARDINER.—If we have this grouping system brought into operation, it will afford great facilities to the Nationalist party, that has such an influence in New South Wales. When they want to send their officers to examine the ballot-papers, they will not have so much difficulty under the proposed system. The simple fact is that, after the election, this political organization in New South Wales had the opportunity to examine the ballot-papers. This is not the first occasion on which I have heard of the matter from an authoritative source.

Senator LYNCH.—Why did you not move for a Royal Commission?

Senator GARDINER.—I am not prepared to move in that direction upon everything I hear. I know that the Minister (Senator Pearce) is as much surprised as I was when I first heard it, and I am glad that the information has been made public. All the explanations



that can possibly be offered will not nullify what has been admitted on the part of the Nationalist party.

Question—That the words proposed to be left out be left out—put. The Committee divided.

|              |    |
|--------------|----|
| Ayes .. .. . | 19 |
| Noes .. .. . | 5  |

|                |    |
|----------------|----|
| Majority .. .. | 14 |
|----------------|----|

AYES.

|                       |                   |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Benny, B.             | Garling, H. C. M. |
| Bolton, W. K.         | Givens, T.        |
| Buzacott, R.          | MacDonald, J. V.  |
| Cox, C. F.            | Millen, E. D.     |
| Crawford, T. W.       | Pearce, G. F.     |
| Drake-Brockman, E. A. | Plain, W.         |
| Duncan, W. L.         | Rowell, J.        |
| Earle, J.             | Vardon, E. C.     |
| Fairbairn, G.         | Teller:           |
| Gardiner, A.          | De Largie, H.     |

NOES.

|                 |               |
|-----------------|---------------|
| Elliott, H. E.  | Senior, W.    |
| Lynch, P. J.    | Teller:       |
| Payne, H. J. M. | Wilson, R. V. |

PAIR.

|               |                |
|---------------|----------------|
| Henderson, G. | Russell, E. J. |
|---------------|----------------|

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Senator LYNCH (Western Australia) [6.4].—It will be well for honorable senators to hear the amendment read again, loudly and slowly. It is proposed to substitute the following for the sub-clause we have just negatived:—

A group shall include the names of those candidates only who notify the Commonwealth Electoral Officer for the State in the prescribed manner after they have been nominated, and not later than 12 o'clock noon on the day of nomination, that they desire to have their names included in that group with the names of the other candidates in that proposed group, and with those names only.

Apparently, there are to be two sets of candidates in a group. The position now is that one set of candidates must notify the Commonwealth Electoral Officer for the State that they wish their names to be included in a particular group with the names of others, and I shall want some light thrown upon this proposal before I shall vote for it.

Senator WILSON.—Ministers have the numbers, and are going right on.

Senator LYNCH.—Probably they have; but I am anxious to know where we stand. It is a most extraordinary piece of draftsmanship, but I cannot blame the mover, because I know the

dangers associated with drafting an amendment in a hurried manner within the chamber. I ask honorable senators to study the verbiage of this provision, and endeavour to ascertain what it means. Does it mean that there are to be two classes in each group, one of which shall be obliged to notify the Electoral Officer, while the other will be informed by some mysterious means, and not called upon to notify the Electoral Officer in any way? A sub-clause drafted as this is is not creditable to the Government now fathering it or to this Chamber.

Senator PEARCE (Western Australia)—Minister for Home and Territories) [6.7].—I wish to allay the fears expressed by Senator Lynch that this sub-clause has been hurriedly drafted. It was submitted yesterday by Senator Garling, when I took the opportunity of passing it on to the Crown Law officers for consideration and approval. The drafting is, therefore, in order, and is, I believe, in accordance with the views of the majority of the Committee.

Senator SENIOR (South Australia) [6.8].—This provision appears to give officials the right to protect certain individuals when that should be done only by law. In the first place, who is to approach the Commonwealth Electoral Officer of the State and stipulate that certain names only shall be included?

Senator Cox.—The three candidates.

Senator SENIOR.—By what means are they to comprise a group?

Senator PEARCE.—By joint and several agreement.

Senator LYNCH.—Between whom?

Senator PEARCE.—Between the three candidates.

Senator SENIOR.—How is the joint and several agreement to be brought about?

Senator PEARCE.—By mutual agreement amongst themselves.

Senator SENIOR.—Three men are to mutually agree to the detriment of the fourth?

Senator PEARCE.—They can include a fourth if they desire.

Senator WILSON.—And they can bury him, too, if they wish.

Senator SENIOR.—It is not by choice or selection that three men comprise a group.

Senator PEARCE.—There may be four, or even six. Would the honorable senator give one man the power to force himself on a group against the wishes of the other three?

Senator SENIOR.—Three men in a group could exclude a fourth.

Senator PEARCE.—Who is to have the right—the one man or the three?

Senator GARLING.—Those who agree.

Senator SENIOR.—One has as much right as the others. The provision as it stood was that any candidates who notified the officer could be included in the group; but it now means that a trinity can combine to exclude every one else, thus making a very close corporation of it.

Senator LYNCH.—It is another disqualification of a candidate.

Senator SENIOR.—Yes, although he may be selected outside.

Senator WILSON (South Australia) [6.11].—I agree with all Senator Senior has said, and I, too, am anxious to know who is to form a group. During the last elections I received the indorsement of three parties, but at the next election which I contest, if this preposterous proposal is adopted, I shall be compelled to desert two of those parties which have supported me.

Senator E. D. MILLEN.—No. It will merely require the honorable senator to state his position.

Senator WILSON.—The Liberal party in South Australia, for instance, will nominate three candidates, the Nationalist party three candidates, and the Country party will do the same in order to protect their interests.

Senator Cox.—Not necessarily.

Senator WILSON.—These are the facts which must be faced now, and not several years hence, when I have to contest an election. This provision, if adopted, will force me into the position of severing my connexion with two parties which assisted me during the last election. The parties outside will naturally seize the opportunity and nominate three candidates.

Senator DRAKE-BROCKMAN.—They may do so.

Senator WILSON.—The odds are decidedly against me, as the parties at the next election will utilize the machinery

we are providing for them. Honorable senators have no right to treat this matter lightly, because it is very important, particularly in connexion with the forthcoming Senate elections. To me it is vital, and every honorable senator should realize before he votes that he is assisting to increase the strength of two great parties at the expense of candidates representing other organizations. Senator Garling admits that he favours branding candidates.

Senator GARLING.—Why does not the honorable senator toe the line?

Senator WILSON.—What brand is to be placed on me? Senator Rowell and others know the decision arrived at in South Australia, which resulted in my election to the Senate. I came out as an anti-Socialist candidate, and after two years of service I am asked to which party I belong. Let honorable senators ask the Leader of the Opposition (Senator Gardiner) if I belong to his party. Since I have been here I have been a candid critic of the Government because it is my duty as a public man to investigate the legislation introduced; but notwithstanding my criticism, I do not think it can be said that I have failed to support their policy. Since this Bill has passed the second-reading stage, I have given its provisions very careful consideration, and have sought the advice of very reliable authorities. I ask honorable senators to consider the position under the grouping system of a candidate who has received the support of three parties. Can three parties indorse his candidature?

Senator CRAWFORD.—Of course they can.

Senator WILSON.—Then the honorable senator does not understand the system.

Senator CRAWFORD.—Cannot the honorable senator's name appear in each group?

Senator WILSON.—A candidate cannot have his name in three groups.

Senator CRAWFORD.—But three could be in the one group.

Senator WILSON.—But a candidate cannot be in more than one group. I put this to the Government in all seriousness: A man comes into the Senate to make good, and he does make good, and yet, under this provision, the Government will deprive different sections of the right



to give that man their indorsement. That is anti-British, unfair, and unworthy of a Chamber such as this.

Question—That the words proposed to be inserted be so inserted—put. The Committee divided.

|         |    |    |    |
|---------|----|----|----|
| Ayes .. | .. | .. | 19 |
| Noes .. | .. | .. | 5  |

|             |    |    |    |
|-------------|----|----|----|
| Majority .. | .. | .. | 14 |
|-------------|----|----|----|

|                       |                   |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| AYES.                 |                   |
| Benny, B.             | Garling, H. C. M. |
| Bolton, W. K.         | Givens, T.        |
| Buzacott, R.          | MacDonald, J. V.  |
| Cox, C. F.            | Millen, E. D.     |
| Crawford, T. W.       | Pearce, G. F.     |
| Drake-Brockman, E. A. | Plain, W.         |
| Duncan, W. L.         | Rowell, J.        |
| Earle, J.             | Vardon, E. C.     |
| Fairbairn, G.         | <i>Teller:</i>    |
| Gardiner, A.          | de Largie, H.     |

|                  |                 |
|------------------|-----------------|
| NOES.            |                 |
| Bakhap, T. J. K. | Payne, H. J. M. |
| Elliott, H. E.   | <i>Teller:</i>  |
| Lynch, P. J.     | Senior, W.      |

|               |                |
|---------------|----------------|
| PAIRS.        |                |
| Thomas, J.    | Keating, J. H. |
| Reid, M.      | Wilson, R. V.  |
| Henderson, G. | Russell, E. J. |

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Amendment agreed to.

**Senator WILSON** (South Australia) [6.25].—I do not intend to speak at length at this stage. I believe that the clause, as amended, will be carried. If it is, the people of Australia will have occasion to say, not "Thank God for the Senate," but "Thank God for the House of Representatives."

**Senator LYNCH** (Western Australia) [6.26].—The carrying of this clause on the authority of the statement which came from the Ministerial bench will impose another disability on candidates, as well as on the electors. It will place the fate of any man who intends to be a candidate for the Senate in the hands of three or four people. I positively object, on the part of potential candidates, as well as on the part of the electors, to such a limitation of their freedom. I am not responsible for it. The responsibility rests on the Government and the majority who vote for it. It represents another disqualification for intending candidates, and limits the choice of the electors to the selection of those who, under this provision, will have the fate of candidates in their hands.

**Senator GARDINER** (New South Wales) [6.28].—I should like to know by what method the alphabetical order of groups will be arranged where one contains three candidates and another contains two?

**Senator PEARCE**.—That is provided for in clause 10 of the Bill.

Question—That the clause, as amended, be agreed to—put. The Committee divided.

|         |    |    |    |
|---------|----|----|----|
| Ayes .. | .. | .. | 18 |
| Noes .. | .. | .. | 4  |

|             |    |    |    |
|-------------|----|----|----|
| Majority .. | .. | .. | 14 |
|-------------|----|----|----|

|                       |                   |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| AYES.                 |                   |
| Benny, B.             | Garling, H. C. M. |
| Bolton, W. K.         | Givens, T.        |
| Buzacott, R.          | MacDonald, J. V.  |
| Cox, C. F.            | Millen, E. D.     |
| Crawford, T. W.       | Pearce, G. F.     |
| Drake-Brockman, E. A. | Plain, W.         |
| Duncan, W. L.         | Rowell, J.        |
| Earle, J.             | <i>Teller:</i>    |
| Fairbairn, G.         | de Largie, H.     |
| Gardiner, A.          |                   |

|                  |                |
|------------------|----------------|
| NOES.            |                |
| Bakhap, T. J. K. | <i>Teller:</i> |
| Elliott, H. E.   | Lynch, P. J.   |
| Payne, H. J. M.  |                |

|               |                |
|---------------|----------------|
| PAIRS.        |                |
| Thomas, J.    | Keating, J. H. |
| Reid, M.      | Wilson, R. V.  |
| Henderson, G. | Russell, E. J. |

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

*Sitting suspended from 6.30 to 8 p.m.*

Clause 4—

Section 76 of the principal Act is amended by omitting paragraph (a), and inserting in its stead the following paragraph:—

"(a) in the case of a Senate election—

(i) if the total number of votes polled in his favour as first preferences is more than one-tenth of the average number of first preference votes polled by the successful candidates in the election; or

(ii) where the name of the candidate is included in a group in pursuance of section 72A of this Act, if the average number of votes polled in favour of the candidates included in the group as first preferences is more than one-tenth of the average number of first preference votes polled by the successful candidates in the election; or"

*Section proposed to be amended—*

76. The deposit made by or on behalf of a candidate at a Senate election or at a House of Representatives election shall be retained pending the election, and after

*the election shall be returned to the candidate or to some person authorized by him in writing to receive it if he is elected; or*

*(a) in the case of a Senate election, if the total number of votes polled in his favour as first preferences is more than one-tenth of the average number of first preference votes polled by the successful candidates in the election; or*

**Senator LYNCH** (Western Australia) [8.0].—This clause appears to make some attempt to regulate the procedure with regard to the lodging and forfeiture of deposits by candidates, and, therefore, it is very important, particularly to a candidate who may be in danger of forfeiting his deposit. Paragraph i. reproduces word for word the verbiage of the Act as it stands; but paragraph ii. deals with the position of group candidates, who, as I shall point out, are to be placed in a specially privileged position. We are providing that if a candidate other than a group candidate polls less than one-tenth of the average votes recorded for the successful candidates, he shall forfeit his deposit. But not so in the case of a group candidate, because the lowest nominee of a group will be assisted by the number of votes polled by the highest candidate in that group, and the number of votes credited to him will be lifted up to the average of the group. All candidates should be placed on the same level. Why this attempt to penalize the independent man? I object to the proposal, which is only additional evidence of the pernicious system which is sought to be ingrafted upon our electoral machinery. I am opposed to it from A to Z. Why should any differentiation be made between any of the candidates? The Government, having taken one false step by carrying a proposal for the group system, must now take another step by extending special privileges to candidates of a group.

**Senator GARDINER.**—Hear, hear!

**Senator LYNCH.**—I am glad that, at last, Senator Gardiner sees the light. The second paragraph of the clause under notice is the second false step, and I want some enlightenment upon it; otherwise I shall move to have it struck out. What has the independent candidate done that he should be penalized in this way? We have it on the best of authority, that of Senator Gardiner himself, that he is in

the Senate by virtue of the fact that, in the alphabetical arrangement of candidates' names at the last election, he was placed before Senator Garling; the suggestion, of course, being that the electors of New South Wales, being jaded and tired, or perhaps too full of politics, "dropped their bundle," so to speak, and said, "Oh, here is Gardiner. We will have him; he will do." But, of course, there is another side to that argument, and it supports what I am contending, namely, that an intelligent community will always find their man when they want him, even if he has a Hebrew character for the first letter of his name. Unless I get some satisfactory explanation for the insertion of paragraph ii., I shall oppose it entirely, for the simple reason that if a man goes through the ordeal and becomes a candidate—and by the action of Senator Gardiner in supporting the group scheme it will be much more difficult in the future than it has been in the past—he should not be further penalized.

**Senator PEARCE** (Western Australia —Minister for Home and Territories) [8.12].—Senator Lynch is arguing against any forfeiture of deposits at elections. If he is in favour of that course, he will not object if ballot-papers are loaded almost to any extent, and naturally he will not only vote against the clause, but should go further, and vote the original section out of the Act, thus doing away altogether with the necessity for any deposit. We have to face the fact that political parties exist, and if there are three or four vacancies to be filled, the respective parties will nominate candidates to fill them. It is obvious that, under the preferential system, the electors voting the party ticket will do so in the order of their individual choice, with the result that one candidate of a group or party may get very few first preference votes, but a great many number two and number three preferences. I think Senator Garling could recite a very interesting experience of the operation of the Act as it stands, for I understand that, although he was runner-up at the last election, he forfeited his deposit. The intention is to deter candidates who have no earthly chance of election from putting the country to



unnecessary expenditure merely for the sake of advertisement. I have heard of a man who did not address a solitary meeting, but, nevertheless, he submitted himself as a candidate, and got his name placed on the ballot-paper. He did not expect to win, and, indeed, did not want to. When he was asked why he nominated, he replied that he was a barber, and that it was a good advertisement for him, as it brought him a good deal of extra business. Parliament, in its wisdom or unwisdom, according to the view taken, has decided that in certain circumstances a candidate shall forfeit his deposit. This provision was inserted in the Act to deter people who have no earthly chance of election from nominating and putting the country to useless expenditure. The amendment does not put a person who is a member of a group at any advantage over the person who is running independently; but as the party man's vote is divided by three or four, according to the number of names on the ticket, and as he suffers by that division, it insures that the actual vote he gets shall be dealt with in precisely the same way as the actual vote of the independent candidate. The proposal made in the Bill is the only way in which we can accomplish that. It puts the group man on an equality with the independent man, but it does not give him an advantage. Surely Senator Lynch, much as he might dislike the group or the party system, would not penalize a man because he runs on a party ticket and is included in a group.

Senator ROWELL.—The present system might penalize a man who is eventually elected.

Senator PEARCE.—It might. For those reasons I ask the Committee to vote for the proposal.

Senator GARDINER (New South Wales) [8.17].—Senator Lynch had no occasion to angle for my support in this matter. If he will throw his mind back to the last occasion when this matter was before the Senate he will find that it was I who pointed out that a candidate might come within a few votes of winning a seat and yet forfeit his deposit. I was laughed at by members of this Chamber. I made myself acquainted with the provisions of the Bill. An instance in support of what I say was furnished by the elections in New South Wales. Senator Garling, who

got 300,000 votes, did actually forfeit his deposit. I understand that the deposit was refunded by the Government, and I have several times thought of inquiring whether the unfortunate independents had their deposits returned.

Senator PEARCE.—All the forfeited deposits were returned after the last election.

Senator GARDINER.—I am glad to hear that. I thought it possible that only the powerful machines would be able to get the money back. No members of our party lost their deposits, because we knew too much about the Act. We saw the danger, and gave each candidate enough first preferences to save him. Mr. Conroy, who ran as an independent, did not lose his deposit, but, as we all know, candidates who got hundreds of thousands of votes did. I favour the abolition of the deposit. I quite realize the inconvenience that is caused by a very large number of candidates coming forward, and that the reckless, careless man, the one who is out to advertise his business, or to make a fool of himself generally, is a very great source of annoyance. At the same time, why should an independent candidate who wants the people of this country to have an independent representative, who sees evil in the party system, and who starts out to convert half-a-million electors to his view, lose his deposit because he does not convert them at the first attempt? He has two powerful party machines arrayed against him. Why make him pay a penalty of £25? He is honest, straightforward, everything desirable in a political contest, but because he lost, through no fault of his own, but through the lack of intelligence on the part of the electors, he is penalized. If we were to penalize the electors for not voting for him there might be some sense in it. The system of requiring a deposit creates a property qualification. What is £25 to a wealthy man who, perhaps, has no more ability than the man who is out only to advertise his business? What is £25 to a man with thousands of pounds a year income? He gets more than £25 worth of satisfaction out of the fact that he is a candidate for Parliament. He gets all the interest that one gets when in the real fight, and while the penalty is nothing to him, it bears heavily upon a man who has not £25 to spare. If we are a free people, and if we so frame our Electoral Acts that every

elector has a right to sit in the Senate by the fact of being an elector, I can see no good reason for putting a penalty on a man whom the electors do not estimate at the same value as he estimates himself. We say that the humblest, the most uneducated, the most unfitted to exercise the franchise, may exercise it without let or hindrance. I agree with that principle; but when we come to the question of electing members of Parliament, if one does not get a sufficient number of votes, he has to pay a penalty. Could not we discover a more acceptable way of doing it even under the present Act? I think that a better system than saying that a man must get one-tenth of the winning first preferences would be to strike out all reference to first preferences, and require him to get a percentage of the votes, whether in the first, second, or third count. In the last election in New South Wales, a candidate who had 6,000 votes on the first count, and hundreds of thousands on the other counts, lost his deposit. That might occur again. It cannot occur with group candidates, but it can with others. I realize that this Bill will not get the consideration that it ought to get from the Committee, because we are acting in accordance with fixed principles that do not provide much scope for altering the Act. What is the position in regard to how members will be elected? What will be the position six months hence, when we go to the country? We shall then find the National party deep in their dug-outs, well entrenched, and well supported. We shall find attacking them from the open country two organized parties, and a lot of independents. If we want to get them out, and this Bill is passed, there will be a simple way of doing it. The Country party and the Labour party will have to say, "We have only to combine our votes. We have no need to ask the Labour man to vote for the Country man, or the Country man to vote for the Labour man, but we have only to say that, after giving our first preferences to our own men, we will give the second preferences of the Country party to the Labour party, and of the Labour party to the Country party." As a Labour man I say that we are prepared to do it.

Senator WILSON.—If that is done, it will be good-bye to every National candidate in Australia.

*Senator Gardiner.*

Senator GARDINER.—It will.

Senator PEARCE.—It has been tried, and has failed.

Senator GARDINER.—It has never been tried, but it will be tried. There are some States in which it would mean good-bye to the Country party, and some in which it would mean good-bye to the Labour party, but it is an absolute certainty that it would be good-bye everywhere to the National party. We are not wise in passing an Electoral Bill which, by the method of counting, leaves it to outside organizations to so affect the will of the people. Reverting to the question of the loss of the deposit, I say that as there are three vacancies the first, second, and third votes should all count to the candidates when it comes to a question of deciding whether they have had sufficient support to save them from forfeiting their deposits. The system of taking the three ballots as if they were separate and distinct is wrong. When this proposal was before the Chamber on a previous occasion, I opposed it. I opposed the principle of forfeiting a deposit because the electors do not sufficiently appreciate a good man. Whether he is a Nationalist, Socialist, Labour man, Independent, or anything else, it is not his fault if the electors do not vote for him, and why should he be penalized for it? I know that, particularly in an election like that for the Senate, where the constituencies are very large, and the printing bill very heavy, an unlimited number of candidates would be a serious matter; but while £25 penalizes the poor man, it is no restriction on the rich man. It penalizes those without cash, and does not interfere in the slightest degree with those who have money to burn. That is not the way we should deal with people who want seats in this Chamber. Instead of shutting out competition the Senate should invite it. We want some of those splendid men of whom Senator Lynch spoke—those independent-minded men who are on pedestals, and will not come down to the level of party organizations. We get them here only when they are astute enough to be shining models of independence, after they are safely in their seats. Before they get here, they are very docile party men, who submit to party discipline, march in the party ranks, and keep right



in step with the party. When they are here, they will have no dictation from outside organizations. I believe that the logical thing to do is to wipe out the deposit. Its absurdity is proved by its effect at the last election. Some of the candidates who forfeited their deposits went very near winning. Having had such shocking examples of the evil of a clause of this kind, it would be better for us to wipe it out.

**Senator PAYNE** (Tasmania) [8.31].—The Minister (Senator Pearce) did not apparently quite realize the intention of Senator Lynch in his opposition to this clause. I do not think the honorable senator gave any indication of a desire to dispense with the deposit.

**Senator LYNCH**.—I never suggested it.

**Senator PAYNE**.—I agree to a very great extent with the view put forward by Senator Lynch, especially in regard to the differentiation that he made as to the penalty to be imposed. Under the previous clause, which provides for the group system, it would be possible for three Nationalist candidates to combine and form a group, while another candidate who failed to get in that group would be penalized more severely, even though he might be a Nationalist also, in the event of his not receiving one-tenth of the average number of first preference votes of the successful candidates. The Minister referred to the possibility of a candidate in a group obtaining a very small percentage of the average number of first preference votes. That might be so, but the same thing would apply equally to any other candidate outside the group. No organization has ever urged the electors that No. 1 votes should be given to Brown, No. 2 to Jones, and No. 3 to Robinson. The organizations simply ask the electors to vote solidly for their particular parties.

**Senator PEARCE**.—Senator Gardiner told us that that was done in each division in New South Wales.

**Senator PAYNE**.—I have never known the Nationalist party to urge the electors to give the first preference to a particular candidate.

**Senator GARDINER**.—They did in New South Wales. Senator Cox got the first preference.

**Senator EARLE**.—The unsuccessful candidate has only to get one-tenth of the average number of first preference votes of the successful men.

**Senator PAYNE**.—I quite agree that, if a candidate does not secure that proportion of the votes, he should forfeit his deposit; but the candidate who is in a group, and the man who is not in a group, if both get the same number of first preference votes, should be on an equality in regard to the forfeiture of the deposit. Why should the man outside of the group be penalized? If it can be shown that the two candidates are on exactly the same basis, my objection to the clause disappears.

**Senator GARLING** (New South Wales) [8.39].—The ground for the objection raised by Senator Lynch exists only in his own mind. Take the first paragraph of the clause, which provides for a case where the total number of votes polled in a candidate's favour as first preferences is more than one-tenth of the average number of first preference votes polled by the successful candidates in the election. Suppose that I had been elected, together with Senators Cox and Duncan, at the last election. For convenience sake I shall refer to the candidates as A, B, and C. Approximately the following would have been the number of votes polled:—A, 200,000; B, 10,000; C, 6,000—a total of 216,000. On dividing by three, the result is 72,000, and the unsuccessful candidate who wishes to save his deposit must poll one-tenth of that number, or 7,200 votes. Then take the second case, where the name of the candidate is included in a group. Assuming that No. 1 candidate receives 200,000 votes; No. 2, 10,000; and No. 3, 6,000, we have exactly the same total, and the unsuccessful candidate will lose his deposit only if he fails to get 7,200 votes. We really have the same position in each case. I suggest, however, that one-tenth is rather too high a proportion for the unsuccessful candidate to be required to poll, and I would prefer making it one-fifteenth. I have used figures which approximate the number of votes polled by Senators Cox and Duncan and myself in the first preference. I secured just under 6,000 first preference votes, and if a similar result were experienced at the next election and I were unsuccessful I would have to get 7,200 votes in order to save my deposit. That is a fairly large number, but, if we made the proportion one-fifteenth, it would mean that the unsuccessful candidate would have to secure 5,000 first preference votes, or lose his deposit.

Senator LYNCH (Western Australia) [8.41].—The example cited by the Minister (Senator Pearce) when Senator Garling was within an ace of being elected is not *apropos* of the position under this clause. I flatly dispute the statement that a group candidate would be placed on an equality with an independent candidate. I can show from returns from Queensland and other States that the group member is raised by thousands above the actual number of first preference votes by reason of the averaging system. While Senator Garling's argument may be right in the case of New South Wales, owing to the electors not being able to distinguish between "Gardiner" and "Garling," if the electors had voted as they should have done, and as they did vote in the other States, Senator Garling would have been here instead of Senator Gardiner in the first instance. I have before me a Queensland return showing that the candidates in a group were not placed on an equality with those not attached to a group, and otherwise known as independent candidates. There were six candidates in the field. The late Senator Adamson polled 144,000 first preference votes, Senator Givens 3,500, and Senator Sir Thomas Glasgow 16,000. Adding those votes together we get a total of about 164,000, and that number, divided by three, gives us a sum of over 50,000. According to the records Senator Givens received only 3,531 first preference votes; but under this proposal the figure on which the forfeiture of his deposit would be considered would be 50,000. If he had been an independent candidate, the matter would have been decided upon the actual first preference votes polled, but because he happened to be a member of the group his total number was increased to 50,000 by dividing the total number of the first three elected candidates.

Senator GARLING.—But then it has to be divided by ten.

Senator LYNCH.—According to the proposal under consideration we have to decide on what basis a candidate shall or shall not forfeit his deposit. We do not take into consideration the actual number of first preference votes polled, because Senator Givens was credited with 50,000 votes, although his first preference votes were only 3,531.

Senator PEARCE.—But he was a successful candidate.

Senator LYNCH.—Of course he was.

Senator PEARCE.—The clause refers only to successful candidates.

Senator LYNCH.—Then take the case of men who were unsuccessful. It does not, however, alter my argument.

Senator PEARCE.—It does not bear on the clause.

Senator LYNCH.—It is not the number of first preference votes polled which is considered.

Senator GARLING.—No; the aggregate has to be divided by three.

Senator LYNCH.—If it is contended that members of a group are placed on terms of equality with independent candidates, the provision must have been misread, because it is not the number of first preference votes at all which is considered in dealing with the forfeiture of a deposit.

Senator PEARCE.—The honorable senator is going astray by taking the results before an election is completed. It is not completed until three vacancies have been filled.

Senator LYNCH.—Then let us take the case of the defeated candidates in Queensland, and it will be found that the position is the same. In the case of a group member his effective number of first preference votes is not determined by the actual number he polled, but by the average number polled in a group. In other words, the figure is reached by taking the highest, lowest, and intermediate, and dividing the result by the number of candidates in the group.

Senator PEARCE.—If the honorable senator's argument is correct, Senator Givens should have forfeited his deposit.

Senator LYNCH.—But he was elected. Let us consider the figures of ex-Senator Ferricks, ex-Senator Turley, and ex-Senator Maughan, apart altogether from the Nationalist group. In round figures ex-Senator Turley received 4,000 first preference votes, ex-Senator Maughan 4,000, and ex-Senator Ferricks 129,000, making a total of 137,000, which, divided by three, gives an average of over 45,000 votes for the three candidates. According to the proposed system ex-Senator Turley would receive, not 4,000, but 45,000 votes.

Senator PEARCE.—That is not so.

Senator LYNCH.—If ex-Senator Turley had been an independent candidate, and had polled, say, 14,000 votes, he would have been called upon to forfeit his deposit.



Senator PEARCE.—The honorable senator is wrong.

Senator LYNCH.—Then I shall read paragraph (i)—

If the total number of votes polled in his favour as first preference is more than one-tenth of the average number of first preference votes polled by the successful candidates in the election; or . . .

That deals with the candidates under the present law, and paragraph (ii) reads—

Where the name of the candidate is included in a group in pursuance of section 72A of this Act, if the average number of votes polled in favour of the candidates included in the group as first preferences is more than one-tenth of the average number of first preference votes polled by the successful candidates in the election; or . . .

When it is a question involving the forfeiture of the deposit of a candidate in a group, the actual number of votes polled is not considered, but the average number polled. In the case of ex-Senator Turley, ex-Senator Maughan, and ex-Senator Ferricks, the average number is 45,000, whereas if ex-Senator Turley had been an independent candidate, and had polled 4,000, his total would have been taken at 4,000, because he would not derive any benefit from the averaging of the total of the votes polled by him and his two colleagues. There is, therefore, an unreasonable discrimination between a candidate in a group and one who is standing as an independent.

Senator GARLING.—Does the honorable senator say that he has to get the average?

Senator LYNCH.—Yes.

Senator GARLING.—Is it not one-tenth of the average?

Senator LYNCH.—It is the average of the first preferences of the three successful candidates that determines his figure, and the essential point is that a candidate in a group, unlike a candidate outside a group, does not have the question of the forfeiture of his deposit tested according to the actual number of first preference votes recorded, but on the average number in the group of which he is a member, and that is where it is decidedly unfair.

Senator PAYNE (Tasmania) [8.55].—I am indebted to Senator Garling for endeavouring to enlighten me on this matter, but he did not succeed in what he set out to do. He claimed that there was no differentiation between a candidate outside a group and one included in a

group in the forfeiture of deposits. He quoted certain figures which I shall use to show that he was quite wrong in his contention. I shall make his figures apply to Group "A," which we will say represents the Labour group.

Senator GARLING.—But I was referring to candidates.

Senator PAYNE.—And I shall quote the figures submitted by the honorable senator.

Senator GARLING.—I did not quote them as representing, say, Groups "A," "B," or "C."

Senator PAYNE.—But I shall do so to enable the honorable senator to follow me more readily. Let us assume that Group "A" on the ballot-paper represents three candidates nominated by the Labour party. The first candidate, who will be termed "A," receives 200,000 first preference votes; candidate "B" receives 10,000; and candidate "C" 6,000, making a total of 216,000 votes. The average is therefore 72,000. The next group, "B," is nominated by the Nationalist party, and the first candidate D receives 150,000 first preference votes; the next candidate E 46,000; and the third candidate F 5,000, making a total of 201,000 votes. The average in that case would be 67,000.

Senator GARLING.—But we cannot have two sets of candidates.

Senator PAYNE.—But you must have them. Candidate F in Group "B" receives 5,000 votes; but when the question of forfeiture of deposit arises, candidate F would be credited with 67,000 votes, which is the average of the group. Lower down on the ballot-paper, there may be two candidates G and H, probably representing the Nationalist party, who were not in the group; and although G gets 7,000 votes and H, say, 500 less, these two independent candidates would forfeit their deposit, while candidate F, with 5,000 votes, would not forfeit his, because he would receive the benefit of the average figures. In view of this, how can Senator Garling contend that a man outside a group is in as favorable a position as one within a group? I have quoted the honorable senator's figures.

Senator GARLING.—Those are not my figures.

Senator PAYNE.—I have quoted the honorable senator's figures in Group "A."

Senator GARLING.—The honorable senator did not understand my figures.

Senator PAYNE.—I followed them sufficiently to understand that if this provision is adopted, candidate F, who was in a group, with 5,000 first preference votes, would not forfeit his deposit; while candidates G and H, who were independents, and who received 7,000 and 6,500 respectively, would forfeit theirs, because the average of the successful candidates in Group "A" was 72,400. For the reasons given, I oppose the clause.

Senator LYNCH (Western Australia) [9.0].—I should like the clause to be put in paragraphs. I am in favour of the first paragraph, though, as I have already said, I think it might be amended with advantage. Whilst retaining that paragraph, I should like to have the second paragraph rejected altogether, because I do not think it right to differentiate in the matter of liability to forfeiture of deposit between candidates in groups and independent candidates.

The CHAIRMAN (Senator Bakhap).—It is competent for the honorable senator if he pleases to move the omission of any paragraph of the clause.

Senator LYNCH.—Then, in order to put all the candidates on the same footing in this matter, I move—

That sub-paragraph (ii) be left out.

Question put. The Committee divided.

|      |    |    |    |
|------|----|----|----|
| Ayes | .. | .. | 5  |
| Noes | .. | .. | 12 |

|          |    |    |   |
|----------|----|----|---|
| Majority | .. | .. | 7 |
|----------|----|----|---|

AYES.

|                  |                  |
|------------------|------------------|
| Bakhap, T. J. K. | Payne, H. J. M.  |
| Gardiner, A.     | Teller:          |
| Lynch, P. J.     | MacDonald, J. V. |

NOES.

|                       |               |
|-----------------------|---------------|
| Buzacott, R.          | Pearce, G. F. |
| Drake-Brockman, E. A. | Rowell, J.    |
| Earle, J.             | Vardon, E. C. |
| Elliott, H. E.        | Wilson, R. V. |
| Garling, H. C. M.     |               |
| Givens, T.            | Teller:       |
| Millen, E. D.         | Cox, C. F.    |

Question so resolved in the negative.

Amendment negatived.

Senator LYNCH.—As a matter of personal explanation I wish to say that I contracted with Senator Fairbairn to pair on all these matters, but I quite forgot about it when the last division was called. I regret that I did so, and apologize to Senator Fairbairn.

Clause agreed to.

Clauses 5 to 9 agreed to.

Clause 10—

After section one hundred and five of the Principal Act the following section is inserted:—

"105A. In printing the ballot-papers to be used in a Senate election—

- (a) the names of candidates included in groups in pursuance of section seventy-two A of this Act shall be printed in groups on the ballot-papers before the names of candidates not included in groups;
- (b) the names in each group shall be printed in the alphabetical order of the surnames comprised in that group;
- (c) the order of the several groups in the ballot-papers shall be determined as follows:—

(i) a number shall be placed against the name of each candidate in each group corresponding with the numerical order in which the initial letter of the surname of the candidate occurs in the alphabet;

(ii) the numbers against the surnames of the candidates in each group shall be added together, and the sum thus obtained in respect of each group shall be divided by the number of candidates in the group, and the quotient thus obtained shall be the quotient of the group;

(iii) the first group in the ballot-papers shall be the group having the smallest quotient, and the second shall be the group having the next larger quotient, and so on, until the order of each group is determined;

(iv) in the event of two or more groups having the same quotient, the order of those groups in the ballot-papers shall be in accordance with the relative alphabetical order of the surnames first occurring in each of those groups, and, if those surnames are the same, then in accordance with the relative alphabetical order of the surnames next occurring in each of those groups; and

(v) if the order of priority cannot be determined in the manner provided for under the preceding sub-paragraphs of this paragraph, it shall be determined by the Commonwealth Electoral Officer;

- (d) before the surname of each candidate in the first group in the ballot-papers there shall be printed the letter ' (A) '; before the surname



- of each candidate in the second group in the ballot-papers there shall be printed the letter ' (B) ' and so on, as the case requires;
- (e) if there are two or more candidates having the same surname in any group, their names shall, subject to the provisions of this section, be arranged according to the alphabetical order of their christian names, or, if their christian names are the same, then according to the alphabetical order of their residences, which shall in such cases be arranged and stated in the ballot-papers;
  - (f) the order of the names of the candidates whose names are not included in any group shall be determined in the same manner as the order in a group of the names of the candidates included in that group;
  - (g) where similarity in the names of two or more candidates is likely to cause confusion the names of those candidates may be arranged with such description or addition as will distinguish them from one another; and
  - (h) except as otherwise provided by the regulations, a square shall be printed opposite the name of each candidate."

**Senator LYNCH** (Western Australia) [9.5].—In this clause we come to another gem of this exotic that is proposed to be implanted in our legislation. The clause defines the way in which groups and the names of independent candidates shall appear on the ballot-paper. I should like to know whether it makes any provision for a possible attempt by one political party to secure the inside running as against other parties. It occurs to me that a political party may try to turn this clause to its own advantage at the expense of the other parties. As men who have gone through the rough and tumble of politics we can say, without being mealy-mouthed about it, that occasionally advantage is taken by political parties, but we are here to see fair play between candidates. It occurs to me that candidates whose surnames begin with the letters, A, B, or C, may be described as men of high alphabetical potentiality, and they will have a splendid chance under this Yankee innovation, which has been discarded by America, not only as individual candidates, but also as members of a group. We have had the Gardiner and Garling example of a community that cannot vote intelligently, notwithstanding all the money spent on education in New South Wales. That State is suggested as the exemplar for the other States of the

Commonwealth, and yet the introduction of this Bill is itself a confession that the people of New South Wales are unable to understand the difference between Gardiner and Garling. The theory of this clause is that those whose surnames begin with the first letters of the alphabet have the best chance because of the position in which their names will appear on the ballot-paper. Of course, Senator Pearce is an exception to this theory, because the electors of Western Australia went down the alphabet, and picked his name out from the bottom. But in these matters Western Australian candidates deserve, of course, to be placed in a class by themselves. The theory that underlies this innovation in our electoral law is that it is a big thing for a candidate to be first in alphabetical order on a ballot-paper. The electors of this country are so tired and jaded that in tobogganing down the alphabet from A to Z they find themselves unable to stand the strain, and can seldom get down as low as the V's and the W's amongst the Vardons and Wilsons. It is possible that a political party may have amongst its candidates persons named Anderson and Absolom, and others named Vardon and Wilson, and the party will give serious consideration to the high alphabetical potentiality of those whose surnames begin with the letter A, in view of the way in which, under this clause, the position of a group on the ballot-paper has to be decided. If the surname of a candidate begins with a letter far down in the alphabet, his name will be represented by a high number. If it begins with A, B, or C it will be represented by the numbers 1, 2, or 3. The numbers represented by the names of all the candidates in a group are added together, and the sum is divided by the total number of candidates. It will be seen that if there is a small dividend and a big divisor, the result will be a small quotient, and a political party by a selection of a sufficient number of candidates whose surnames begin with the letters A or B, may thus manœuvre their group into the first position. I hope that I am as clear as one can expect to be in an effort to explain this complex and cryptic proposal.

**Senator GARDINER.**—I shall take the honorable senator's suggestion to our executive, and advise them to nominate three or four dummy candidates whose surnames begin with "A," to make the average good.

Senator LYNCH.—It is because of the possibility of that kind of thing being done that I am asking the Government what they propose to do if the political party includes in its group of candidates a number of dummies of high alphabetical power in order to secure a first position on the ballot-paper.

Senator EARLE.—Does the honorable senator think that it makes any practical difference where a candidate's name appears on the ballot-paper?

Senator LYNCH.—If I think it does make a difference it is because I am guided by the reasoning of the men who induced the Government to put forward this proposal. As I have said, the theory is that voters become brain weary before they can go down the full list of candidates, and, as they did in New South Wales, they vote for Gardiner when they desire to vote for Garling, because the voting power of New South Wales was shown to be in favour of Garling rather than of Gardiner. In none of the other States would such a thing occur, because the electors cast their votes intelligently, with the result that for the time being all the Nationalist candidates in those States were returned. As both Senators Gardiner and Garling are here now, probably neither will dispute the truth of what I have said. I have drawn attention to the possibilities, and I do not know whether the Government have in mind any proposal to meet the situation.

Senator GARLING (New South Wales) [9.16].—I do not intend to vote for the whole of the clause as it stands. Sub-paragraph i of paragraph c provides that a number shall be placed against the name of each candidate in each group. If honorable senators will look at the specimen ballot-paper in the schedule to the Bill, they will find that it contains only alphabetical letters ungrouped. The wording of the clause is not quite happy in this respect.

Senator PEARCE.—The honorable senator apparently has missed the introductory words of the paragraph, which state that the order of the several groups in the ballot-paper shall be determined in the manner provided in paragraphs i to v.

Senator GARLING.—I think it ought to be quite clear. I now direct attention to sub-paragraph iii, which provides—

(iii) The first group in the ballot-papers shall be the group having the smallest

quotient, and the second shall be the group having the next largest quotient, and so on, until the order of each group is determined.

I am supporting the group system simply for the purposes of making clear to the electors the position of the various candidates, and in order to clarify the position I move—

That the following words be added to sub-paragraph (iii) of paragraph (c):—"and the names in each group shall be bracketed together."

Senator PEARCE (Western Australia—Minister for Home and Territories) [9.21].—First of all, if such an amendment is to be inserted at all, it should not be inserted in paragraph c, but in paragraph b, which is a direction as to the printing of the ballot-papers. But I want to give a reason why the amendment should not be inserted at all. If honorable senators will turn to the schedule, they will see a specimen ballot-paper prepared in accordance with the proposed group system. It is intended to designate the groups by a letter of the alphabet. If, as suggested by Senator Garling, the candidates of the group are bracketed together, an elector might be misled into believing that a vote given for one would be sufficient for the whole of a bracketed group. This would be highly dangerous. I appeal to the honorable senator not to press his amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Senator LYNCH (Western Australia) [9.23].—In this clause of thirteen parts—an ominous number—there is direction as to the grouping of candidates' names on the ballot-paper, and I find that when the unfortunate Electoral Officer has worried himself down to paragraph e, he will be in a dilemma if two or more candidates bear the same surname and Christian name; but the clause offers a brilliant solution of the difficult question as to their position on the ballot-paper by providing that it must be settled by the alphabetical order of their residences. What does that mean? Will the order be determined by the nature of a candidate's dwelling—whether a brick or stone house, a hessian or calico tent?

Senator PEARCE.—It means the residence of a candidate as shown on the roll; the name of his town.



Senator LYNCH.—The whole clause bristles with so many difficulties that I feel it my duty to protest once more against its acceptance.

Senator GARLING (New South Wales) [9.27].—I direct attention now to paragraph *d*, which provides—

Before the surname of each candidate in the first group in the ballot-paper there shall be printed the letter "(A)"; before the surname of each candidate in the second group there shall be printed the letter "(B)"; and so on, as the case requires;

It is my intention to submit an amendment, which, to some extent, strikes at the principle of the group system. I have already stated that I only support the system if it is going to clarify the policies of parties and *personnel* of candidates in the eyes of the electors. I cannot see how clarification will be achieved by simply placing an alphabetical letter against the name of a candidate. Frankly, the group system is going to be a group of parties or organizations, and it should be our duty to make it clear that we go before the electors as candidates of particular parties or organizations. I fail to see how this will be achieved by designating the groups with the letters "A," "B," "C," and so on. The marking of ballot-papers in this way was, I believe, designed to meet possible criticism against the introduction of the party system, but as criticism has already been directed at the Bill on the ground that it will exalt the party system, why not be frank, and provide for candidates' names to appear on the ballot-paper as the nominees of the National party, Progressive party, the Labour party, or any other party which can exist as a political organization? The use of the letters of the alphabet is simply a lame way of hiding the fact that candidates are seeking election as party men. Having stated my attitude, I move—

That paragraph (*d*) be left out with a view to insert in lieu thereof the following:—

- (*d*) If a candidate so desires and if he shall have intimated such desire in the prescribed manner on his nomination paper at the time of nomination there shall be printed in brackets before the surname of such candidate on the ballot-paper such word or words or abbreviation thereof as shall serve to indicate the party or

organization of which he claims to be a supporter:

Provided always that—

- (i) before any such distinguishing prefix is so printed the name of such party or organization shall not later than one month before the date of nomination have been duly registered in the prescribed manner with the Commonwealth Electoral Officer; and
- (ii) the written consent of such party or organization to the use of such prefix shall have been notified in writing by the registered secretary of such party or organization to the Commonwealth Electoral Officer not later than twelve o'clock noon on the day of nomination.

The Minister (Senator Pearce) will, no doubt, point out in what respect it is wrong to endeavour to put the party nomenclature on the ballot-paper. At present I fail to see any objection. I have already heard an argument against it to-day, but I cannot see the force of it, having regard to the fact that what I am aiming at, and what the Bill intends to provide for, is to make clear to the electors what the various groups in the field are there for.

Progress reported.

Senate adjourned at 9.37 p.m.

## House of Representatives.

Thursday, 3 August, 1922.

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. Sir Elliot Johnson) took the chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.

### WAR SERVICE HOMES.

PRESS CRITICISM OF MINISTER FOR REPATRIATION: BUILDING OF HOMES IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA: AGREEMENT WITH SOUTH AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT.

Mr. LISTER.—Last year I drew the attention of the Government to the reported maladministration of the War Service Homes Department, and asked

that a Commission be appointed to inquire into certain charges that had been made. I desire now to ask the Prime Minister whether he has seen in to-day's press a statement in which very grave reflections are made on the Minister for Repatriation (Senator E. D. Millen), with regard to War Service Homes building operations. In view of that, does the right honorable gentleman propose to take any action?

Mr. HUGHES.—I have not seen any statement in to-day's press referring to War Service Homes, or anything else. If there is in the press a statement which reflects upon my honorable colleague, the Minister for Repatriation, I shall discuss it with him, and will then answer the question asked by the honorable member.

Mr. BLUNDELL.—As the Minister representing the Minister for Repatriation has definitely stated, in this House, that there is no agreement in existence between the Commonwealth and the Government of South Australia for the building of War Service Homes, I desire to ask him, if that is so, under what authority has £1,000,000 been advanced by the Commonwealth to the South Australian Government for the building of soldiers' homes?

Mr. HECTOR LAMOND.—A similar question is being asked, on notice, in another place to-day, and I shall read to the honorable member the answer that is to be given to that question.

1 and 2. The memorandum signed by the then Assistant Minister and the State Minister for Repatriation provided for a loan of only £800,000 during last financial year. When the formal agreement, in accordance with this memorandum, was prepared and submitted to the South Australian Government for approval, they contended that an error had been made in the memorandum, and that the contemplated loan should be for £1,000,000. The Commonwealth agreed to increase the loan as requested, and continued to advance moneys to the South Australian Government in good faith, but when the agreement was engrossed and submitted for signature, the South Australian Government held it up for weeks, and subsequently submitted an entirely new agreement. In view of this action, it is not thought unreasonable to require the completion of the agreement before further advances are made. The new agreement submitted by the South Australian Government has been referred to the Commonwealth Crown law authorities.

## COMMONWEALTH REPRESENTATION IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

Mr. MAKIN.—I desire to ask the Prime Minister when the House may expect to be furnished with information as to the intention of the Government with regard to the appointment of an official representative of the Commonwealth, such as a High Commissioner, in the United States of America?

Mr. HUGHES.—I have no official information to give the honorable member. What he suggests is a thing eminently to be desired. Many of these proposals resemble going to heaven. We all want to get to heaven, but, apparently, there are obstacles.

## LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

### REPRESENTATION OF AUSTRALIA.

Mr. BOWDEN.—Has the Prime Minister yet determined upon the representation of the Commonwealth at the forthcoming Conference of the League of Nations at Geneva? I addressed a similar question to the right honorable gentleman about a month ago, and he then said that the matter was under consideration. As the Conference is to be held next month, honorable members desire to know the names of the two representatives to be appointed in addition to the High Commissioner.

Mr. HUGHES.—It has not been the practice for the Commonwealth to have three representatives at such gatherings, nor do I think that anything is to be gained by representation by three delegates. I think I said in reply to the honorable member's previous question that the High Commissioner would represent the Commonwealth in this instance. Questions were then asked as to whether we proposed to consider a request for the appointment of a woman delegate to represent the women of Australia, and I replied that that matter was receiving attention. Reference was again made to that phase of the subject yesterday. I shall be glad to hear from honorable members why they think we ought to have three representatives at the Conference. If the House is of the opinion that nothing less than three will do, the Government will appoint three, but, for



myself, I do not see the necessity for appointing three. The matter is, however, one for the House to decide.

member and others as to the unfavorable season, I promise to consider the matter further.

## COUNTRY TELEPHONE LINES.

### FORWARD CONSTRUCTION POLICY.

Mr. LAZZARINI.—Can the Postmaster-General give the House information as to when the forward policy of his Department in regard to the construction of country telephone lines will be proceeded with in New South Wales? By way of explanation, I wish to say that a line from Gunning to Byalla, in my electorate, was surveyed over two years ago, and that, although I have frequently urged its construction, I can obtain no satisfaction?

Mr. POYNTON.—I hope, immediately after the delivery of the Budget statement by the Treasurer, to give the House a full and detailed statement of our programme. I recognise that honorable members are anxious to know what is being done in this respect.

## EXPORT OF FRUIT.

### REMISSION OF INSPECTION FEE ON APPLES AND PEARS.

Mr. PROWSE.—In view of the unprofitable experience of apple exporters this year, will the Minister for Trade and Customs take into consideration the advisableness of remitting the inspection fee of  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per case proposed to be charged by the Department on apples and pears for export? Does the honorable gentleman realize that a shipment of 60,000 cases involves a payment of £75 for inspection work, which can be carried out in a couple of days?

Mr. RODGERS.—Where the Commonwealth has set up a system of inspection of exports, particularly of such exports as meat and butter, it is the practice to require a proportion of the costs so incurred to be borne by the products. The Commonwealth has a very large staff of inspectors and others, whose duty it is to examine produce for export. The fruit industry, up to the present, has contributed little, if anything, to the cost of inspection. I am not prepared at this stage to say that we will not make a charge for inspection; but, in view of the representations made by the honorable

## PARLIAMENT HOUSE RESERVE.

### CONVERSION OF VACANT BLOCK.

Dr. MALONEY.—In view of the great generosity of the State of Victoria in providing us with this magnificent building free of all rental charge, can you, Mr. Speaker, inform the House if anything is to be done to remove that awful eyesore of an empty block which is guarded by a splendid fence so that children may be kept from playing upon it? I refer to the unkempt plot of ground to the north of Parliament House, and I wish to know if that great iron barrier around it cannot be removed in order that children may have access to the ground to play thereon.

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. Sir Elliot Johnson).—I have to inform the honorable member, as I have done on previous occasions when referring to the same matter, that the plot of ground in question was the subject of negotiations some time ago between the President of the Senate and myself on the one hand, and the Speaker and the House Committee of the State Parliament on the other. A scheme was submitted to them for the conversion of the block into an attractive little ornamental garden space. We undertook to be responsible for the removal of the fence and lay out the garden area, and the City Council were prepared to shoulder their share of the maintenance scheme. However, the proposal did not meet with the approval of the State authorities, one objection being that they thought they might require the ground for public buildings when the Federal Parliament gave up the occupancy of its present location. Recently a suggestion was made by an officer of the Education Department, apparently with the approval of the State Parliament House Committee, that the ground should be utilized for the purpose of a children's playground in connexion with the High School close at hand. I communicated recently with the President of the Senate, who is chairman of the Joint House Committee, with respect to the matter of this piece of

ground, and I have received from him the following reply:—

Early this week I had a visit from one of the officials of the Education Department, who desired to make a proposal that it should be made available as a recreation ground for the pupils of the High School just across the way. He informed me that the State Parliamentary Committee had given him permission, provided it was agreeable to our Committee. I promised him that, on receipt of a written request from him in that regard, enclosing copy of formal permission of the State Parliament, I would be prepared to recommend to our Joint House Committee that the desired permission should be granted, provided that all costs necessary for the preparation and maintenance of the ground should be borne by the Education Department. I anticipate that the necessary papers will be all available within the course of a day or two, and then, after consultation with you, the necessary action can be taken.

That is all I can communicate at this stage. Whether the piece of land in question should be reserved solely for the use of pupils of the High School or should be made available as a general playground are subjects for further consideration.

Mr. FOLEY.—In the event of any arrangement being made with the Victorian authorities for the disposal of the reserve, will the House be given an opportunity of considering the proposal with a view to allowing all children, rather than those from only one school, to use the ground?

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. Sir Elliot Johnson).—I think I have already intimated that that aspect would require to be considered when the proposal was before us in concrete form. The whole matter will be dealt with by the Joint House Committee when a definite proposal in writing has been received.

## UNEMPLOYMENT.

### ALLOCATION OF PROPOSED GRANT FOR PUBLIC WORKS—IRON TRADES AND SHIPBUILDING.

Mr. HUGHES.—The honorable member for Capricornia (Mr. Higgs) asked the following question yesterday:—

Will the Prime Minister lay upon the table of the House a statement showing the allocations to the different States of the amount of £250,000 to be advanced by the Federal Government for road making purposes?

I am now in a position to give the honorable member the desired information. The allocations to the different States of

the advance by the Federal Government for road making purposes are as follows:—

|                         |          |
|-------------------------|----------|
| New South Wales .. ..   | £96,627  |
| Victoria .. ..          | 70,173   |
| Queensland .. ..        | 35,154   |
| South Australia .. ..   | 22,886   |
| Western Australia .. .. | 15,212   |
| Tasmania .. ..          | 9,948    |
| Total                   | £250,000 |

Mr. MATHEWS.—The Prime Minister received a deputation last week from representatives of various unions, who placed before him the matter of unemployment in the iron trades and in the shipbuilding industry. Has the right honorable gentleman any information regarding what is proposed to be done to provide employment?

Mr. HUGHES.—I understood that the information had been already published; representatives of the press interviewed me last night on the matter. Shortly put, the suggestions made by the deputation had relation to the repairing of ships, and to a contract forming part of the work to be carried out under the Anglo-Persian Oil Company's agreement with the Commonwealth. As to the repairing of ships, reference was specially made to the *Araluen*. The other vessels lying idle are new ships which have just come out of the yard. I discussed the whole subject with Mr. Kneen, Acting Manager for the Commonwealth Line in Australia; and, after very careful consideration, he reluctantly came to the conclusion that it would not pay to repair the *Araluen*. The sum of £20,000, I understand, would be necessary to fit her for sea, and it is more than questionable whether she would be worth £20,000 afterwards. With respect to the other point raised by the deputation, namely, that relating to the construction of works under the Anglo-Persian oil agreement, I went into the proposition with Sir Robert Garran, one of the Commonwealth directors on the company. I gathered from him that there were either four or five contracts—the work had been so divided—and that the reference made by the deputation was to one among those four or five. The others had been let within the Commonwealth. This particular matter, however, was one of urgency, and was such as



would determine the date by which the works could be erected. The directors, after closely examining the whole of the facts, had said that it would be impossible to extend the time, and, further, that all the work that would be done here would consist of punching holes in plates which would have to be imported. When one sets against that position the fact that, for eight or nine months, some hundreds of men who would be otherwise employed upon the finished refinery would be out of work, the conclusion was reluctantly reached that nothing further could be done other than had already been decided upon.

### COMPANY PROFITS: INCOME TAX.

Mr. WEST.—I rise to make a personal explanation. On 27th July, I asked the Treasurer (Mr. Bruce) the following question :—

In reference to his speech at Adelaide on the 29th May, in reply to a deputation asking that a portion of company profits should be exempt from income tax, in which he stated it was the intention of the Government to deal with the matter, will he bring in the necessary Bill at an early date?

To that the Treasurer replied—

Apparently the honorable member has been misled by some faulty newspaper report. I did not receive a deputation in Adelaide on the subject mentioned, or make any statement of the character indicated.

I have before me a copy of the *Australian Insurance and Banking Record* of 21st June, and in it I find the following passage :—

The Commonwealth Treasurer (Mr. Bruce) referred to the taxation of companies in his speech at Adelaide on 29th May. He said that the section of the Income Tax Act dealt with the power given to the Commissioner of Taxation to step in in the case of any company and say that a sufficient part of the profit has not been distributed. He had explained in Brisbane that there were two questions connected with it. One was the placing in the hands of a single individual the great responsibility of that determination, and the other was the fact that the intention of Parliament had evidently not been carried out in the proper sense, by reason of the fact that a legal interpretation which had been placed upon it had said that there was no option to the Commissioner to say that a sufficient amount had to be distributed. The tax was to be levied on the total profits, and no part was to be kept

in reserve. It was the intention of the Government to deal with the question with regard to the two sides of it.

I quote that passage to show the foundation upon which my question was based. I think the Treasurer will give me some credit for taking a keen interest in the financial welfare of Australia.

### PAPERS.

The following papers were presented :—

Public Service Act—Promotion of W. C. Street, Postmaster-General's Department.

Seat of Government Acceptance Act and Seat of Government (Administration) Act—Ordinance of 1922—No. 5—Interpretation.

### CUSTOMS TARIFF (INDUSTRIES PRESERVATION) ACT.

Mr. CHARLTON asked the Minister for Trade and Customs, *upon notice*—

1. Was the exchange value of the mark in Germany on 29th July last 2,800 to the £1 sterling?

2. Does the Customs Tariff (Industries Preservation) Act 1921 only provide for a depreciation to the extent of 240 marks to the £1?

3. If so, will he take immediate steps to introduce amending legislation in order to give ample protection to our Australian industries from the cheap German goods which will be imported from 1st August?

4. Does he not think that, unless such steps are at once taken the unemployment question will become more serious?

Mr. RODGERS.—The answers to the honorable member's questions are as follow :—

1. No information is available as to 29th July, but on 31st July the rate was 3,015 marks to £1 sterling.

2. Yes.

3. As announced in notice of motion tabled yesterday, it is intended to take early action to amend the Customs Tariff (Industries Preservation) Act 1921.

4. See answer to No. 3.

### SUGAR.

#### REBATES: PURCHASES ABROAD: FRUIT AND JAM INDUSTRIES.

Mr. HILL asked the Minister for Trade and Customs, *upon notice*—

1. What is the total weight of the sugar content of processed products such as milk and fruit exported from the Commonwealth since the present sugar agreement has been in force?

2. What is the amount per ton of rebate on such products?

3. What was the total amount paid as a rebate on the sugar content of fruit exported?

4. What was the total amount of rebate on the sugar content of milk exported?

5. What other rebates have been made, and what is the amount paid, if any?

Mr. RODGERS.—The information is being obtained.

Dr. EARLE PAGE asked the Minister for Trade and Customs, *upon notice*—

1. What quantities of sugar were purchased by the Government in Java in 1918, 1919, 1920, and 1921 respectively?

2. What are the names of the brokers or agents acting on behalf of the Commonwealth in each case?

3. What commission was paid to each broker in each case?

4. If no brokers were employed, from whom was the sugar purchased?

5. What price per ton f.o.b. and c.i.f. respectively was paid for each purchase?

6. To whom were the payments made?

7. What was the date of each purchase and the date of each payment?

8. Will the Minister lay upon the table of the House—

(a) All documents and correspondence relating to each of the above-mentioned purchases?

(b) Separate balance-sheets for each of the years ended 30th June, 1918, 1919, 1920, 1921, and 1922?

Mr. RODGERS.—The information is being obtained.

Mr. HIGGS asked the Minister for Trade and Customs, *upon notice*—

1. Whether he has seen a statement by Mr. Everard, M.L.A., at the Athenæum Hall, Doncaster, on Saturday evening, 29th July, viz.:—

“Sugar could have been bought at £10 to £15 per ton—at one time it could hardly be given away in Java. The Federal Government had mulcted the people in purchases at £70 per ton upward, and the fruit-growers were now suffering?”

2. To what extent is the foregoing statement true, and what is the explanation?

3. Will he state to what extent the Australian sugar industry benefited the Australian fruit and jam industries during the war?

Mr. RODGERS.—The answers to the honorable member's questions are as follow:—

1. Mr. Everard's statement, as quoted in the press, implies that the Government made very bad business deals, inasmuch as, whilst Java

sugar was obtainable at from £10 to £15 per ton, the Government bought at £70 per ton and upwards.

2. When, about the middle of 1918, Java sugar was quoted at £10 per ton, there was no need, or even probable necessity, to arrange for importing sugar. The record 1917-18 Australian sugar crop left 53,000 tons of surplus sugar on hand at July, 1918, which, plus the incoming 1918-19 crop, was then regarded by the Government and its advisers as not justifying importations, seeing that, on existing expectations, the supplies would be sufficient to last until the following Australian crop would be available.

3. However, abnormal conditions late in 1918 (exceptional frosts, floods, &c.) made it necessary to import about 40,000 tons of sugar to furnish supplies between May and July, 1919, until the next Australian sugar crop would be available.

4. Several Java quotations between £14 and £17 15s. f.o.b., in October, 1918, were declined, as there was no immediate hurry to buy, and it was generally believed that the market would soon ease to prices such as £10 and £12, which had obtained in that country for some time.

5. Late in October, 1918, 1,000 tons Mauritius were bought at £17 18s. 9d. f.o.b., and 44,500 tons Javas were obtained at £18 15s. f.o.b., between 20th November, 1918, and 19th December, 1918, which prices were ruling rates.

6. Realizing that the 1919 Australian crop would not be as great as usual for various reasons, the Government bought 66,000 tons Javas on 25th February, 1919, at £22 f.o.b., equalled £24 0s. 7½d. c.i.f.—a very good bargain for the Commonwealth, seeing that most of this sugar was neither needed nor landed until towards the end of 1919 and some in January, 1920, at which latter date Java prices had soared to over £70 per ton. Even when the first shipment arrived in August, 1919, sugar prices had increased greatly, a Cuban purchase having cost £40 6s. 8d. f.o.b. (includes exchange).

7. The most expensive sugar was all bought in 1920, during which Java sugar could not be obtained at any time under £35 per ton, and was for long quoted at from £40 to £80 per ton. This was quite two years after the Java prices mentioned by Mr. Everard.

8. As to the allegations that Australian prices and bad foreign buying had caused the fruit-growers to suffer, the following facts, which speak for themselves, are supplied:—

#### PRODUCTION OF JAM IN AUSTRALIAN FACTORIES.

| Year.   | lbs.        | £         |
|---------|-------------|-----------|
| 1913    | 85,890,929  | 1,224,550 |
| 1914    | 82,161,164  | 1,214,859 |
| 1915    | 87,303,622  | 1,321,815 |
| 1915-16 | 105,329,723 | 1,907,815 |
| 1916-17 | 110,179,680 | 2,154,783 |
| 1917-18 | 126,810,310 | 2,557,382 |
| 1918-19 | 142,290,204 | 2,895,805 |
| 1919-20 | 120,287,906 | 2,974,275 |



## EXPORTS OF JAMS, CANNED FRUITS.

| Year.   | Jams = $\frac{1}{2}$ sugar. |            | Canned Fruits = 1-9 sugar. |         |
|---------|-----------------------------|------------|----------------------------|---------|
|         | lbs.                        |            | £                          |         |
| 1913    | ..                          | 1,858,231  | ..                         | 18,153  |
| 1914    | ..                          | 4,770,117  | ..                         | 14,549  |
| 1915-16 | ..                          | 22,849,553 | ..                         | 20,890  |
| 1916-17 | ..                          | 45,074,352 | ..                         | 119,937 |
| 1917-18 | ..                          | 64,891,116 | ..                         | 249,321 |
| 1918-19 | ..                          | 79,277,560 | ..                         | 474,767 |
| 1919-20 | ..                          | 44,793,409 | ..                         | 524,348 |

9. The above remarkable results could not have been obtained had there been no Australian sugar industry, and much Australian fruit would have had to be destroyed. During the three years of world shortage, when most countries had very restricted supplies, Australia would have been just as short of sugar, and would have had to buy at least twice as much sugar at famine prices as she did.

10. Finally, whilst Australian sugar prices have never exceeded £49 per ton wholesale, British prices reached, in 1920, £112 per ton for grocery trade, and £160 per ton for jam manufacturers.

11. Whilst the retail price in Australia has never exceeded 6d. per lb., it rose to the following amount, for restricted supplies:—United Kingdom, 14d.; United States of America, 13d.; France, 18d.; Italy, 18d.; and Java, 10d.

## PRESS TELEGRAMS.

Mr. HIGGS asked the Postmaster-General, *upon notice*—

1. Whether he will give a description of some of the items of news that may be sent from one State of the Commonwealth to another State by press telegram at Federal newspaper press rates?

2. May information for publication in the press concerning accidents, crimes, divorces, &c., be sent by telegraph at Federal press rates?

3. What are said press rates—for single telegram and multiple?

Mr. POYNTON.—The answers to the honorable member's questions are as follow:—

1. Commonwealth press telegrams are defined in Post and Telegraph Regulation 366 as follows:—

Commonwealth press telegrams shall mean those relating to parliamentary, executive, and departmental proceedings of the Commonwealth, or reports of proceedings of Federal Royal Commissions, or parliamentary papers and Bills; or summaries thereof, without notes or comments, or any extraneous matter beyond what may be necessary to afford a connective statement of the facts.

2. No. Press telegrams containing information such as that named would be subject to the rates shown in part (b) of the undermentioned scale of rates prescribed by the Post and Telegraph Rates Act 1902-1920.

3. The rates for press telegrams prescribed by the Post and Telegraph Rates Act 1902-1920 are as follows:—

(a) Press telegrams within the Commonwealth, relating to parliamentary, executive, departmental, and other Commonwealth proceedings as prescribed:—Including address and signature: Not exceeding twenty-five words, 1s. 4d.; exceeding twenty-five but not exceeding fifty words, 1s. 8d.; exceeding fifty but not exceeding one hundred words, 2s.; every additional fifty words or portion of fifty words, 8d.

(b) Other press telegrams:—Including address and signature: Not exceeding twenty-five words, within any State, 8d.; Inter-State, i.e., from any one State to any other State, 1s. 4d.; exceeding twenty-five but not exceeding fifty words, 11d.—1s. 10d.; exceeding fifty but not exceeding one hundred words, 1s. 9d.—3s. 6d.; every additional fifty words or portion of fifty words, 8d.—1s. 4d.

The foregoing rates are exclusive of portage charges, and are for single press telegrams. The charge for a multiple press telegram is the charge for a single telegram for the first copy and an additional charge of 4d. per 100 words, or portion of 100 words for each copy.

## TELEPHONES: PROPOSALS IN 1916.

Dr. EARLE PAGE asked the Postmaster-General, *upon notice*—

1. What tenders and requisitions for telephone installations, construction, materials, and stores were submitted by the Postmaster-General to the Treasury in the year 1916, and rejected?

2. What was the price of the materials comprised in such tenders?

3. What is the present price of the same materials?

Mr. POYNTON.—The matter is being inquired into, and the information asked for will be supplied as early as possible.

## COMMONWEALTH ELECTORAL OFFICE.

MR. L. AINSWORTH.

Mr. ANSTEY asked the Minister representing the Minister for Home and Territories—

1. With further reference to the subject of a question asked on the 27th ultimo relative to the preferment given to Mr. Ainsworth, a junior fifth class officer—will the Minister explain the nature of the additional duties other than electoral work which Mr. Ainsworth was

regarded as being more efficient to perform than the senior applicants, Messrs. Hicks and Senior, whom the Public Service Commissioner had long since certified as eligible for promotion to the fourth class?

2. What were the advertised duties of this position?

3. Were the senior officers, Messrs. Hicks and Senior, or any of the other applicants advised of the nature of these additional duties?

4. Were any of the persons specified in the preceding paragraph tested as to their ability to discharge the said additional duties as efficiently as Mr. Ainsworth? If not, why not?

5. Before a certificate in terms of section 44 (1) of the Commonwealth Public Service Act was issued, were Messrs. Hicks and Senior examined by a Public Service Inspector as to their ability to perform the said additional duties?

6. Have senior officers in the past been promoted to positions in connexion with the work of which they had had no previous experience, and had to rely on others until they became acquainted with the work of their new office. If so, why was a departure made in the case of either Mr. Hicks or Mr. Senior?

7. Does the major portion of the duties of the office to which Mr. Ainsworth was appointed consist of electoral work?

8. Was a communication sent direct to either Messrs. Hicks or Senior notifying them of the Public Service Commissioner's intention to recommend Mr. Ainsworth for this fourth class vacancy, or was such intention made known to them by public advertisement. If not, why not?

9. To what extent is Public Service Regulation No. 281 given effect to when the Public Service Commissioner makes a report or recommendation affecting an officer of the Public Service?

10. Is it a fact that the Commonwealth Public Service Commissioner, in reply to a complaint made by the Commonwealth Public Service Clerical Association regarding the preferment given to Mr. Ainsworth, said:—

"The fullest consideration was given to the whole of the applications for the position, which was filled in accordance with the provisions of section 42 of the Public Service Act." If so, why was this House informed that the position was given to Mr. Ainsworth because he would be "required to perform duties other than those connected with the electoral administration"?

11. As the Public Service Commissioner is alleged to have stated that this fourth-class vacancy was filled in accordance with the provisions of section 42 of the Act, will the Minister inform this House whether the provisions of section 44 of the said Act were also given effect to by the Public Service Commissioner when making his recommendation in favour of Mr. Ainsworth?

12. Did the Public Service Commissioner, in view of the long and excellent records of the senior officers, Messrs. Hicks and Senior, before recommending the junior officer, Mr. Ainsworth, issue a certificate "certifying that there is no senior officer available as capable of satisfactorily performing the duties" as Mr. Ainsworth, as is required by section 44 of the Act?

Sir GRANVILLE RYRIE.—The answers to the honorable member's questions are as follow:—

1. Duties connected with the Prime Minister's and Works and Railways Departments.

2. The duties were not advertised, but it was stated that the applicants should have a knowledge of the administration of the joint Electoral Acts and electoral accounts.

3. No.

4. No; a test was unnecessary.

5. No; this was unnecessary.

6. The most efficient officer is invariably selected.

7. No.

8. No. No such action is required by the Public Service Act.

9. Public Service Regulation 281 has no application.

10. Yes. The other duties referred to are portion of the duties of the position.

11. Yes.

12. See answer to 11.

## REPATRIATION: REPAYMENT OF ADVANCES.

Mr. ANSTEY asked the Minister representing the Minister for Repatriation, *upon notice*—

1. Is it the practice of his Department to give preference to returned soldiers, all things being equal, as well as to assist in the promotion of their welfare?

2. Is it true that a returned soldier in the Mallee, who had been advanced money by the Repatriation Department on terms covering a period of years, has asked to be allowed to pay the whole of the balance owing?

3. Is it true that the Department refused to accept payment in full, and said that the repayments would have to be spread over all the years for which it originally advanced the money?

4. Does the Minister favour returned soldiers being allowed to discharge their monetary obligations to the Repatriation Department when such can be honorably done before the expiration of the contract period?

Mr. HECTOR LAMOND. — The answers to the honorable member's questions are as follow:—

1. Yes.



2 and 3. As this question apparently refers to a soldier settler, if the honorable member will furnish particulars, inquiries will be made of the State Government, which is administering land settlement. The Repatriation Department is at all times only too willing that amounts due to it should be repaid at the earliest possible date.

4. See 2 and 3.

### SIR HENRY BARWELL.

#### WHITE AUSTRALIA POLICY—INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION—NORTHERN TERRITORY DEVELOPMENT.

Mr. ANSTEY asked the Prime Minister, *upon notice*—

1. Is it a fact, as alleged by Sir Henry Barwell, Premier of South Australia, that the references made to him in speeches made by the Prime Minister contained frequent misrepresentations on the questions of White Australia and arbitration?

2. Is it true, as alleged by Sir Henry Barwell, that the Prime Minister has stated that "Sir Henry Barwell and others have enrolled themselves into a body which was called the Single Purpose League," having for its object the abolition of arbitration of any kind; if so, on what authority was that statement made?

3. Has the Prime Minister, either by personal investigation, or through the agency of others, or expert reports, or otherwise, formed any definite conclusions on the development of the Northern Territory by white labour?

4. If so, will he answer Sir Henry Barwell by furnishing definite replies to the following questions propounded by him:—

- (a) Are white men capable of sustained manual effort in the tropical parts of the Northern Territory?
- (b) Can white women live there and enjoy reasonably good health while carrying out ordinary domestic duties?
- (c) Can white children be successfully reared there?

Mr. HUGHES.—The answers to the honorable member's questions are as follows:—

1. No. All references made by me were quotations from Sir Henry Barwell's speeches, press interviews, and press letters.

2. No. I did not say that Sir Henry Barwell had joined the Single Purpose League. It is true, however, that I quoted a statement made by Sir Henry Barwell in which he said, "The first thing to do, in my opinion, is to abolish the Commonwealth Arbitration Court. I will undertake that we follow suit in South Australia by putting an end to the State Court."

3 and 4. I have formed very definite opinions on the highest scientific authority, on the testimony of residents, on the health and other statistics, and by my personal investigations in other tropical portions of Australia, that the Northern Territory can be developed by

white labour; that, given decent housing, sanitary and dietetic conditions, white women can live there and enjoy reasonably good health; and that white children can be successfully reared there.

### POSTAL CHARGES.

Debate resumed from 27th July (*vide* page 861), on motion by Mr. BOWDEN—

That in the opinion of this House the time has arrived to reduce the postal charges within the Commonwealth.

Mr. POYNTON (Grey—Postmaster-General) [3.0].—In dealing with this question I propose, first of all, to outline the reasons for which the present charges were imposed. In June, 1918, the then Treasurer (Mr. Watt) advised that, in order to pay war pensions and interest on war loans, the Commonwealth would require to raise in the year 1918-19 a very much larger revenue than had previously sufficed to meet obligations, and he asked the Department of the Postmaster-General to prepare a scheme which would enable additional revenue to the extent of £700,000 to be raised. When delivering his Budget in 1920, the succeeding Treasurer (Sir Joseph Cook) said—

The necessity for raising extra revenue suggests a review of the charges made for services rendered to the public, particularly by the Post Office Department, and new rates are proposed which have a better relation to the increased cost of supplying those services.

Later on, my predecessor (Mr. Wise) asked the House to increase the postal charges, and in doing so submitted a number of reasons in justification for the increases sought to be imposed. Among these were—

(a) The necessity for raising extra revenue to meet financial obligations of the Commonwealth.

(b) The increased working costs of the Postal Department.

He pointed out that those increased costs represented £1,200,000, and were brought about by a number of causes, including higher wages payable as the result of Arbitration awards. The honorable member also pointed out the probable increased cost of inland mails as the result of the liberal policy he had established in regard to outlying services. Where in former years the people supplied with these services had been obliged to bear the whole of the loss sustained by the Department in running these services, and at a later stage 50 per cent. of the

loss, my predecessor announced that in future the Department would bear 75 per cent. of any loss sustained by a particular service. He also pointed out that there would be increased cost in respect of overseas mails, and drew attention to the fact that the percentage increase in postage charges, in which he asked the House to concur, would not be greater than that charged in other countries. I do not wish to deal with the increases made in other countries. In any case, it is hardly fair to compare Australia, with its extensive areas, with other and more settled countries of the world, except, perhaps, to extend consideration to our Postal Department because of these vast areas. The increased rates charged were, however, not introduced at the wish of the Postal Department.

Let me refer to a few of the commitments which the Treasurer had in mind when he asked for additional revenue. I have secured from the Treasury a statement showing the exact position at the present time of what may be termed war or post-war commitments. Our commitments from revenue in respect to interest and sinking fund during the financial year 1921-22 were no less than £21,075,693. I mention this fact because the surplus revenue of the Postal Department goes into the Treasury to relieve, and to that extent relieves, the Treasurer from imposing taxation in other directions.

Mr. AUSTIN CHAPMAN.—Is it a new policy to expect postage to pay for repatriation?

Mr. POYNTON.—It is not a new policy; it is one to which the House agreed when it was brought forward, and I am merely dealing with the position as I find it to-day. Other commitments which the Treasurer had in mind at the time were in respect to war pensions, repatriation expenditure, and payment for other war services. The complete figures are as follow:—

The following expenditure for war services was made from revenue in 1921-22:—

|                                 |            | £ |
|---------------------------------|------------|---|
| Interest and Sinking Fund on    |            |   |
| loans ... ..                    | 21,075,693 |   |
| War pensions ... ..             | 7,028,379  |   |
| Repatriation expenditure ... .. | 2,239,754  |   |
| Other war services ... ..       | 993,338    |   |
| Total expenditure from          |            |   |
| revenue ... ..                  | 31,337,164 |   |

It is interesting to note how much money has been paid out of Consolidated Revenue upon war commitments. To 30th June, 1922, the following amounts had been paid out of revenue—

|                                 |            | £           |
|---------------------------------|------------|-------------|
| Interest and Sinking Fund on    |            |             |
| loans ... ..                    | 88,016,391 |             |
| War pensions ... ..             | 29,328,348 |             |
| Repatriation expenditure ... .. | 10,794,888 |             |
| Other war services ... ..       | 4,618,601  |             |
| Total ... ..                    |            | 132,758,228 |

Mr. AUSTIN CHAPMAN.—I thought it was the Treasurer's duty to deliver the Budget. What connexion have these figures with postage rates?

Mr. POYNTON.—They are of considerable importance in view of the fact that it was this House that agreed that postal charges should be increased, and that the revenue derived from the increase should go to meet the commitments to which I have just been referring.

Sir ROBERT BEST.—I suppose that the Postmaster-General will let us know the amount that has been contributed by the Post Office to the Consolidated Revenue.

Mr. POYNTON.—Yes, I can do so. As the result of the increased charge of  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. imposed in 1918, the revenue of the Department increased in that year by £463,318. From the 1st July, 1919, to 30th June, 1920, the revenue was £745,962, and from the 1st July, 1920, to the 30th September, 1920, it was £197,953, or a total for those twenty-three months of £1,407,233.

Sir ROBERT BEST.—Does all this represent the gross proceeds from the extra postal taxation, or does it simply represent the proceeds, plus something else?

Mr. POYNTON.—It represents the gross proceeds of the extra postal taxation. I wish now to refer to another phase of the question, in order to show the difference in the expenditure in the Department now as compared with the period when penny postage was introduced. Penny postage was introduced in May, 1911, and the following figures are a comparison of the expenditure on



inland and coastwise mail services during 1910-11 and 1921-22:—

|                                                                 | 1910-11. | 1921-22.  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|----------|-----------|
|                                                                 | £        | £         |
| Conveyance of inland mails, not including conveyance by railway | 318,703  | 579,953   |
| Conveyance of mails by railway .. ..                            | 310,575  | 400,475   |
| Subsidies for conveyance of coastwise mails ..                  | 45,775   | 65,467    |
|                                                                 | 675,053  | 1,045,895 |

2. The expenditure for 1921-22 included large non-recurring items, representing accounts held over from previous years, and arrears, totalling:—

|                                                                    |         |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| Conveyance of inland mails, not including conveyance by railway .. | £2,300  |
| Conveyance of mails by railway ..                                  | 67,476  |
|                                                                    | £69,776 |

3. If this non-recurring expenditure is excluded, the total normal expenditure on inland mails during 1921-22 would be £1,045,895, less £69,776, equals £976,119.

4. The basis of payment to the railways for mails carried in 1921-22 was entirely different to that of 1910-11.

Mr. BOWDEN.—Where do you get those figures from?

Mr. POYNTON.—From Mr. Haldane, the Chief Accountant of the Department, and their accuracy is vouched for by responsible men; that is the reason I am keeping so close to my notes. When this motion was given notice of, I asked the officers in the Department to inform me as to the total increased expenditure in respect of salaries or allowances since the Service had been brought under the Arbitration Act. In reply, the Chief Clerk of the Department has furnished me with the following information:—

The increased remuneration granted members of the Federal Public Service organizations registered under the Arbitration (Public Service) Act of 1911, from the date of the first award in 1913 up to the present date, has been as shown hereunder. The figures set forth are on an annual basis, and are calculated as for the first year of operation of awards or variations thereof. These amounts represent increased payments to permanent officers of the Service due directly to arbitration, and do not include increments of salary due to ordinary progression through classes or grades, or increases by promotion; nor do they include the

benefits gained by temporary employees as regards increased remuneration due directly, or indirectly, to arbitration awards, nor the increased amounts drawn by permanent officers as overtime, relieving and travelling allowances, and other payments of a miscellaneous nature:—

|                                                                                      |            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| Aggregate annual cost for permanent staff .. ..                                      | £484,039   |
| Cost of living allowances granted by Arbitration Court prior to 1st July, 1920 .. .. | 436,313    |
| Cost of living allowances granted by Arbitration Court from 1st July, 1920 .. ..     | 220,600    |
|                                                                                      | £1,140,952 |

In addition to the foregoing, permanent officers were paid during 1920-21 at the annual rate of £191,094 on account of basic wage, and £145,952 for child endowment, thus making a total of nearly £1,500,000. I point out that this information does not include the temporary staff, and it is difficult to obtain figures as to what the increase has been as a result of Wages Boards awards and other concessions, because some of these are intermittent.

Mr. BOWDEN.—Is the trend of this argument that we are to have a bigger surplus at the end of this year than we had last year?

Mr. POYNTON.—No one can say what the revenue will be, but the present indications are that it will be bigger at the end of this year than at the end of last year. I do not wish to go into all the details of the arbitration proceedings; there are about a dozen different decisions.

Mr. ATKINSON.—They all mean increased cost.

Mr. POYNTON.—Yes, to the extent I have said. In 1920-21, over and above all these costs, we made a profit on the telephone service of £222,475, a loss of £8,312 on the telegraph service, and a postal profit of £929,605, a total of £1,143,767. There has been a good deal said about what may happen if we reduce the postage to 1d. It is thought by many that if we decrease the rate there will be a greater volume of business. In October, 1920, the war postage was abolished and the rate was raised to 2d. per  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. The war postage increased

the postage by 50 per cent. in respect of 95 per cent of the number of letters posted, but this increase brought about no reduction in the number of letters posted. As a matter of fact, the postings of letters for delivery within the Commonwealth during 1918-19 were 2,403,061 over the previous year, and the postings for 1919-20 were 40,809,898 over those for the year 1918-19. In like manner, the increase of rates in 1920 has not to any extent interrupted the natural growth of postings. As stated, the postings in 1919-20 were nearly 41,000,000 in excess of the postings of the previous year, an increase of  $8\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. The increase was abnormal, and was due partly to large postings by the Departments of Defence and Repatriation, and to the fact that in that year we had a general election and a referendum. The postings of letters for the year 1920-21 showed a decrease of 14,240,847. The postings of packets during the same period, however, showed an increase of 9,426,633. Under penny postage, circulars and other commercial papers were posted as letters. Under the recent rates it is cheaper to send them as packets. Therefore, the actual decrease in postings was 4,814,214. It is not fair to make a comparison of the postings of 1920-21 with those of 1919-20 unless allowance is made for the abnormal conditions prevailing in the latter year. The natural increase of postings in 1919-20 over those for 1918-19 would have been 15,000,000. Therefore, if 1919-20 were credited with that increase, the figures of 1920-21 would show an increase of approximately 12,000,000, exclusive of making allowance for packets. This contention is strengthened by the figures of postings so far available for 1921-22. The complete returns are not compiled, but reports to hand giving the figures as to postings at the General Post Offices in the States show an increase, at these points, in 1921-22, of 9,000,000 over the postings for 1920-21. Further, they show an increase to the extent of 5,600,000 in the number of packets posted.

It is popularly supposed that the introduction of penny postage brought about an enormous increase in postings, but if reference is made to the departmental statistics, it will be seen that the total number of letters posted for de-

livery in the Commonwealth only increased to the following extent:—

|                                                | Per cent. |
|------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1911 (year penny postage introduced) over 1910 | 14.40     |
| 1912 over 1911                                 | 3.76      |
| 1913 over 1912                                 | 4.15      |
| 1914 over 1913                                 | 3.82      |

None of these figures show what I would describe as an abnormal increase.

Mr. BOWDEN.—They all relate to postage for delivery within the Commonwealth?

Mr. POYNTON.—Yes. I am not dealing with oversea mails. In 1911, when penny postage was generally introduced throughout the Commonwealth, the postings increased by 14 per cent. Therefore, no great increase in postings is likely to follow a reduction in rates, especially as the recent increases in rates did not bring about a decrease of postings. In 1912, the year following the introduction of penny postage, the number of postings per head of population was 96.36. In 1920, with twopenny postage, the number was 104.24. The position justifies the assumption that even if penny postage were introduced the increase in business would not exceed 10 per cent. for the first year of its operation. The following table should be of interest:—

| Year ended 30th June.     | Total number of letters, post-cards, and letter-cards posted. | Total population. | Average number of letters, &c., posted per head. |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Under 1d. Postage.</i> |                                                               |                   |                                                  |
| 1912                      | 456,142,239                                                   | 4,733,359         | 96.36                                            |
| <i>Under 2d. Postage.</i> |                                                               |                   |                                                  |
| 1920                      | 546,966,357                                                   | 5,247,019         | 104.24                                           |
| -1921                     | 533,539,744*                                                  | 5,455,423         | 97.8                                             |

\* If to this is added postal articles bearing packet rate of postage, and which under 1d. postage were dealt with as letters, but in 1921 were treated as packets, the total postings would be 542,966,377 and the average number of postings per head of population 99.53.

It is clear from these figures that, as the result of twopenny postage, the mail matter dealt with has not decreased. On the contrary, there has been a marvellous increase. Some people seem to think that, with a reversion to penny postage, the volume of correspondence dealt with by the Department would be doubled, so that there would be no actual loss of revenue.

Mr. Poynton.



Mr. WATKINS.—And the work of the Department, so far as this branch is concerned, would practically be doubled in that event.

Mr. POYNTON.—That is a point which some advocates of penny postage do not seem to take into account. The statistics I have put before honorable members clearly show that, with the introduction of penny postage, there was no abnormal increase in the mail matter dealt with.

Mr. AUSTIN CHAPMAN.—When Senator Thomas brought in penny postage the Department estimated that it would result in a loss of about £750,000 per annum. As a matter of fact, in the first year during which the reduced rate operated we did not lose half that amount, while in the second year there was an actual increase in the postal revenue. It is well known that practically every official of the Department is opposed to penny postage.

Mr. POYNTON.—I think I have clearly shown that, with the exception of the first year, when there was an increase of 14 per cent., the increase in postings under penny postage continued to be normal. To revert to penny postage would be to hit the country districts very hard. My predecessor in office, the honorable member for Gippsland (Mr. Wise) arranged some two years ago for a more liberal treatment of country post-offices and telephone services generally than had ever prevailed before. When a demand is made for a new service in a country district the persons concerned are required to show that it will produce a certain amount of revenue. The Department is now prepared to bear 75 per cent. of the loss on any such service, provided that the people to be served will enter into a guarantee to contribute the remaining 25 per cent. I would prefer to do away altogether with the requirement as to a guarantee rather than revert to penny postage, and so lose revenue.

Mr. BOWDEN.—Is the Postmaster-General proposing to do away with the requirement as to a guarantee?

Mr. POYNTON.—I am not. The adoption of such a course would be attended with certain disadvantages. The very fact that people who ask for a cer-

tain service are prepared to contribute 25 per cent. of any loss that may be incurred in connexion with it is some assurance to the Department that it will not be loaded with an absolutely non-paying undertaking. I would infinitely prefer to do away with the requirement as to a guarantee in respect of special services rather than reduce the revenue of the Department by reverting to penny postage. I do not regard my Department as one merely for the collection of taxation. It is a Department that renders to the public certain services, and for those services it should receive some payment. Does the honorable member for Nepean think that the farmers would benefit by penny postage?

Mr. BOWDEN.—Every one would benefit.

Mr. POYNTON.—No. The merchants would chiefly benefit by such a change.

Mr. BOWDEN.—Does not the honorable member think that the merchants pass on the additional postage charges?

Mr. POYNTON.—They pass on all their costs. Could there be anything fairer than equal pay for equal service? There are some people who would like to bring about a special metropolitan rate. Honorable members representing country constituencies beseech me almost every day to organize badly-needed extensions of telephonic facilities. What would those country representatives say to the Government conceding a special metropolitan postal rate while retaining the twopenny postage basis in country districts? The proposition, although it has been seriously urged by various people, and advocated in the press, is an iniquitous one. Since the recent reductions of rates in the United Kingdom, the estimated increase of business for the financial year has been set down at only 10 per cent. What would be our position if, following a reduction of charges by 100 per cent., we received an accretion of business amounting to only 10 per cent.? If rates were reduced by only  $\frac{1}{2}$ d., there would need to be an increase amounting to fully 33 per cent. in order that the same revenue might be derived from the postal service. Apart from that, however, there would be the factor of increased staff costs. There would be trouble with mail contractors owing to heavier loading. If

there are any men in Australia to-day who are badly paid, a number of our mail contractors must be included among them. If our postal charges were reduced so that there was more business I would be faced with the necessity of paying certain of our mail contractors more to recompense them for their heavier loading. Some people say that my Department should not be revenue earning. Suppose that I hand over to the Treasurer at the end of the financial year a sum of £1,000,000; probably I shall be able to pay into the Treasury more than that amount. But, if the Treasurer were seeking £1,000,000, and had to look somewhere other than in my direction for it, would not the same people have to provide that £1,000,000? If that sum had to be derived by means of additional taxation, who would say that that would be fairer, all round, than the maintenance

of the present postage rates? To argue in that way would be absurd.

Certain critics have referred to bungling in the Postmaster-General's Department. I have some interesting particulars for honorable members regarding telephonic operations and charges all over the world. That there is great lack of telephonic facilities throughout the Commonwealth at present I am bound to admit. The unfortunate position is due to past financial stress; but I shall now compare our charges with rates imposed elsewhere, and I think honorable members will be surprised. I intend to take as a basis an average of 500 calls, and to include the item of rent. The cost in the Commonwealth is £7 12s. 1d.; whereas in New Zealand, it is £8. Dealing with telephone charges in various great cities of the world, calculated on the same basis, I present the following table:—

|                                                                 | 500 calls. | Notes.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                 | £ s. d.    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Australia .. .. .                                               | 7 12 1     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| New Zealand .. .. .                                             | 8 0 0      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| London .. .. .                                                  | 9 12 1     | The London rates apply to all exchanges within 10 miles of Oxford Circus                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Glasgow, Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham                      | 9 2 1      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Paris .. .. .                                                   | 27 15 0    | } Subscribers provide their own apparatus                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Lyons .. .. .                                                   | 20 16 0    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Marseilles .. .. .                                              | 13 18 0    | } The rates were doubled on 1st July, 1920. A capital charge of £49 in the form of a loan returnable when the telephone is given up is levied on each subscriber. It is the intention to double these rates. In addition an installation charge of £5 12s. 6d. is payable. An installation charge of £2 12s. is also payable. An installation charge of £1 13s. 4d. is also payable. In addition an entrance fee of £1 7s. and an installation charge of £11 are payable. |
| Berlin, Hamburg, Munich, and Leipzig                            | 12 5 0     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Frankfurt, Cologne, and Dresden                                 | 11 5 0     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Vienna .. .. .                                                  | 20 0 0     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Copenhagen .. .. .                                              | 16 10 0    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Amsterdam .. .. .                                               | 9 6 0      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Rotterdam .. .. .                                               | 8 19 0     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Stockholm .. .. .                                               | 7 3 0      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Christiania .. .. .                                             | 6 18 0     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Basle, Zurich, Geneva .. .. .                                   | 5 19 0     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| New York (these rates are subject to a discount of 8 per cent.) | 8 5 0      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Boston .. .. .                                                  | 13 11 0    | The charge of £13 11s. includes calls to any part of the Boston telephone area                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Chicago .. .. .                                                 | 9 17 0     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Philadelphia .. .. .                                            | 8 13 0     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| South Africa (Pretoria, Cape Town, Durban)                      | 7 10 0     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

It will be observed that, with the exception of cities in Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and South Africa, our rates are lower than those of any other country. With regard to Sweden, I must point out that each new subscriber is required to pay entrance and installation charges,

Mr. Poynton.

amounting to £12 7s., in addition to rental charges.

I desire now to make a comparison of trunk-line charges in Australia with those imposed in New Zealand, with the proposed rates in Great Britain, and with those existing in the United States of



America. They are all based on three-minutes' conversations, and are as follows:—

| Distance. | Australia.   | New Zealand. | England (proposed rates). | United States of America. |
|-----------|--------------|--------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
|           | <i>s. d.</i> | <i>s. d.</i> | <i>s. d.</i>              | <i>s. d.</i>              |
| 12 ..     | 0 4          | 0 6          | 0 4½                      | 0 5                       |
| 18 ..     | 0 4          | 0 6          | 0 7½                      | 0 7½                      |
| 24 ..     | 0 6          | 0 9          | 0 9                       | 0 10                      |
| 32 ..     | 0 8          | 0 9          | 1 0                       | 1 0½                      |
| 40 ..     | 0 8          | 0 9          | 1 6                       | 1 3                       |
| 48 ..     | 0 8          | 0 9          | 1 6                       | 1 5½                      |
| 56 ..     | 1 0          | 1 0          | 2 0                       | 1 8                       |
| 64 ..     | 1 0          | 1 0          | 2 0                       | 1 10½                     |
| 72 ..     | 1 0          | 1 0          | 2 0                       | 2 1                       |
| 80 ..     | 1 4          | 1 6          | 2 6                       | 2 3½                      |
| 88 ..     | 1 4          | 1 6          | 2 6                       | 2 6                       |
| 94 ..     | 1 4          | 1 6          | 2 6                       | 2 8½                      |
| 100 ..    | 1 4          | 1 6          | 2 6                       | 2 11                      |
| 150 ..    | 1 10         | 2 3          | 3 6                       | 4 2                       |

We have, without doubt, the cheapest telephonic service in the world.

I have before me the report of a Select Committee of the British House of Commons, which was published only this year. The subject of reference was the organization and administration of the telephone service and the method of making charges. The Committee stated:—

Our attention has been drawn to foreign comparisons by several witnesses, and usefully so; but the visits of our delegates to the countries concerned have tended to show that the witnesses were sometimes misinformed, or not quite informed up to date, or else the fresh facts throw a different light on their conclusions. Thus the Norwegian system has been justly held up to us for imitation, since the Norwegian community and tourists in Norway are generally extremely well satisfied with it; but further inquiry has disclosed that it is run at a loss, and that neither the Government nor all private companies put by reserve or depreciation funds in the sense in which they are understood in this country. There was likely to be a deficit in the past year of 4,000,000 or 5,000,000 kroner, mainly owing to increases in wages.

Further, the report of the Select Committee set forth:—

The Swedish telephone administration, which is a State system, and has recently taken over the large private telephone company in Stockholm, informed our delegates that it has earned 8½ per cent. on an average for the last thirty years. There is, however, no separate allowance for amortization or depreciation, and this may create a problem when the plant comes to be renewed, as it must before very long. Renewals as well as maintenance are charged to revenue. In Switzerland, where there is an efficient State system, there was a tolerable

profit two years ago. Last year there has been a deficit, attributed to the slump in trade and increased salaries, of which the reduction is being canvassed.

Thus it is revealed that, with respect to the three great European services whose rates are less than those imposed in the Commonwealth, all are being run at a loss.

In 1919, when the then honorable member for Gwydir (Mr. Webster) was Postmaster-General, there were numerous complaints of bungling in the postal branch, and the Minister thereupon appointed an inquiry officer to make investigations in the various States, both in the cities and in the country, so that there might be ascertained precisely what were the grievances of business people. Upon assuming the office of Postmaster-General I thought that it would be a good idea, as there had been no inquiry since 1919, to make further investigations along the same lines. The instructions to the inquiry officer were that he should ascertain:—

(a) The volume of postal, telegraphic, and telephonic business transacted by a number of principal business firms.

(b) The percentage of faults in handling the business; and

(c) Whether the firms in question are generally satisfied with the service given; and, if not, what section of the service is at fault, and to what degree.

As an outcome of the inquiries pursued in New South Wales, thirty-two leading commercial houses were interviewed. In nearly every instance appreciation was expressed of the good service given by the Department under considerable difficulties which had been brought about by the financial stringency and the rapidly changing economic conditions. The telephone service was, rightly, the principal object of complaint. The following typical details are taken from the list of particulars furnished by the firms visited. In one instance the number of letters posted over a given period was 202,000, and there were only fifty-seven missing from among that volume. In another instance, of 468,000 posted, nine were missing; in still another, of 124,000 posted, one was missing; and, in respect of one other firm, of 130,000 letters posted, five were missing. Among the many millions of letters and postcards

handled by the Department only one letter for every 60,000 has definitely gone astray.

Mr. MAXWELL. — Have most of the missing letters contained money?

Mr. POYNTON.—Such has often been the case; but one cannot help being astounded at the numbers of letters continually held up from delivery for lack of sufficient address. Thousands contain no addresses whatever. In Victoria seventy-one business places were visited, of which fifty expressed complete satisfaction with the service rendered by the Department. Many of the firms commented favorably upon the endeavours of the Department to co-operate with the business people and the public generally for the benefit of all concerned. In Queensland, the general opinion expressed by those interviewed, was that the Department provides a very satisfactory service all round. Altogether fifty-one firms in Brisbane were interviewed, forty-five of whom furnished information which indicated that the value of their transactions with the Department over a period of twelve months was approximately £85,000. The President of the Chamber of Commerce stated, "In a large concern like the Department, complaints are bound to occur, but there is a wonderful amount of accuracy considering the volume of work handled; none are perfect, and in our own business mistakes occur." In South Australia thirty-six firms, whose transactions with the Department aggregate over £62,000 per annum, were interviewed, and the general opinion is that the service is satisfactory. One or two firms drew attention to minor matters in which they thought improvements might be effected, but not one had a serious complaint to make. The advantage of this inquiry amongst business people is that the Department learns of a number of minor grievances, and is able to rectify them at once. Where letters were missing we have been able to trace the culprits, who, in many instances, were employees of the complainant firms. The Department has a list of numerous instances of the kind; yet the postal people have had to bear the blame. Of the postal business transacted in the city of Adelaide for a month, totalling 1,102,188 articles, representing .44 per cent., were undeliverable. Of this number 152 were received without addresses, 251 were returned because of

insufficient addresses, and 18 were posted without contents. In Western Australia 91 firms in Perth, 29 in Fremantle, and 10 in Subiaco were interviewed. General satisfaction was expressed by the public with the facilities afforded by the Department and the services rendered. I have visited these places since, and the people whom I met expressed their entire satisfaction with the Department's work. The chief complaints have been in regard to telephones and extensions into country districts. Trunk lines are the chief trouble to-day, but that difficulty will be overcome by the new scheme, of which I hope to give honorable members particulars later. Inquiries in Hobart and Launceston yielded the same satisfactory results. I have received a number of deputations from people who are already enjoying some service, including deputations from Gippsland and the north of Victoria—and I asked them pointedly if they desired a reduction in the postal rates. In nearly every case they answered emphatically that they did not want a reduction in the rates, but they did want increased services. For instance, complaint is made that a number of trunk lines are overloaded, and that impairs the value of the service.

Mr. BOWDEN.—In regard to telephones, that is the complaint.

Mr. POYNTON.—But those people had no complaint against twopenny postage, and I know that in many districts the residents would be glad to pay much more for a mail service. People in the city complain about having to pay twopence to send a letter, but in some country districts it is difficult to get a mail once a month, and twopence per letter to the residents is a mere bagatelle. What those people want is service, and any money that is available should be utilized in extending existing services throughout the length and breadth of the country. That is my policy.

Mr. BOWDEN.—I thought the Minister's policy was to make revenue to hand over to the Treasurer.

Mr. POYNTON.—When there is a surplus in the Postal Department, it is handed to the Treasurer, but that is in accordance with the decision of this House; and if, after giving service to the people, I can hand over some money to the Treasurer, what is wrong with such a policy? Treating postage as a form of



taxation, is there anything unjust in its incidence when everybody has to pay the same rate?

Mr. ROBERT COOK.—If the Minister grants our requests, he will not have much of a profit to hand to the Treasurer.

Mr. POYNTON.—In all the circumstances, I cannot accept the motion. I believe that, instead of reducing the postage rates, we shall do much better if we give increased facilities in the country. My policy is to do that; and I venture to say that when honorable members see the three-years' programme that will be submitted to the House later they will agree that the Department is making provision for a wonderful extension of facilities to the people.

Mr. BOWDEN.—Out of loan money.

Mr. POYNTON.—Yes, but we shall have to meet the interest from revenue. We shall spend a lot of money on the Sydney General Post Office, for instance, and it will not return interest for a long time, although eventually it will do so. In the meantime, revenue will have to bear the burden of interest and depreciation charges. In view of the fact that the people as a whole do not want a reduction of rates, but demand more extensive and more efficient services, I ask honorable members to support me in voting against the motion.

Sir ROBERT BEST (Kooyong) [3.58].—I do not propose to traverse the lengthy and interesting statement made by the Postmaster-General, but I point out that as the extra postage rates were imposed in consequence of the war, it is but natural that, the war being over, we should look for relief from them as time goes on. Whether or not the present time is opportune for granting relief in regard to postal charges, I am not prepared to say; but, in any event, I think it undesirable that the Post Office should be turned into a taxing machine for purposes other than its own, at least, in times of peace. My object in rising is to draw the attention of the Postmaster-General to an extraordinary anomaly, namely, that at the present rates a parcel can be posted to Germany and other foreign countries at less cost than it can be sent to the United Kingdom. Honorable members will hardly believe that that is so.

Mr. POYNTON.—That is a result of the Madrid Convention.

Sir ROBERT BEST.—The rates of postage charged on parcels addressed to foreign countries, and which exceed the minimum, are less than those charged on similar packages posted to the United Kingdom. The rates as between nation and nation were fixed by the Madrid Convention, but it is competent for any of the signatories to the Convention to fix the local rates within its own borders, or within its own territories or dependencies. The charge on postage between the British Empire and foreign countries is regulated on the ounce unit by the Madrid Convention; but the rates chargeable within the Empire is a matter for ourselves, and this has brought about the anomaly. I am informed that comparatively few commercial packages pass through the post to overseas countries that do not exceed the minimum rates, and therefore the result of the present system is to make it cheaper to send packages to foreign countries than to the United Kingdom.

Mr. MAXWELL.—The honorable member does not suggest that the rates to foreign countries should be increased?

Sir ROBERT BEST.—No; but I desire the anomaly rectified so that the rate to the United Kingdom shall be reduced, and at least placed on a parity with that of foreign countries. As an illustration of the present rates, the postage to the United Kingdom is 2d. for each  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz.; the postage to foreign countries is 4d. for the first ounce, and, I think, 2d. for each additional ounce, and the result of those different rates is that a person sending an 8-oz. parcel to the United Kingdom pays 2s. 8d., but if he sends the same parcel to Germany, or any other foreign country, he pays only 1s. 6d.

Mr. POYNTON.—We have communicated with the parties to the Madrid Convention, and asked them to alter the rate; we cannot alter it.

Sir ROBERT BEST.—The Commonwealth can regulate its own charges as between the United Kingdom and Australia. The Madrid Convention only fixes the rates as between different nations.

Mr. POYNTON.—The parcels business between the United Kingdom and Australia is about 90 per cent. of the whole.

Sir ROBERT BEST.—The Madrid Conference fixed the unit at 1 oz. and specified a special charge per ounce unit

upon international postage. To be fair, I should state that the answer of the Department is that the anomaly is due to the adoption of the 1-oz. unit of postage on parcels sent to foreign countries, and that it is impossible to overcome it without also adopting the 1-oz. unit of weight for domestic and British Empire correspondence. The Department says also that 95 per cent. of the letters which are posted within the British Empire do not exceed  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz., and to alter the unit from  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. to 1 oz. would be impracticable without materially increasing the initial rates of postage. Moreover, it would lose a large amount of revenue which it cannot spare. Nevertheless, I say that the anomaly should not continue. The policy of Parliament and the Government is to extend preference to Great Britain; but we are deliberately hampering trade with the Mother Country by penalizing it in regard to parcels postage as compared with the rates which are charged on parcels sent from the Commonwealth to foreign countries.

MR. POYNTON.—The point is that 94 per cent. of our parcels go to Great Britain.

SIR ROBERT BEST.—But the point is that where the advantage is in favour of the foreign country the same rate should be made to apply to the Empire and the Mother Country.

MR. AUSTIN CHAPMAN.—This ought to be termed "foreign preference."

SIR ROBERT BEST.—It is distinctly "foreign preference." The operation of these rates is distinctly unfair to Great Britain, because it confers a preference to Germany and other foreign countries.

MR. FENTON.—How do the foreign countries treat us?

SIR ROBERT BEST.—So far as I am aware, they treat us fairly; but the Mother Country treats us uniformly with the utmost generosity. I urge the Postmaster-General to give the matter his attention.

MR. POYNTON.—We are already trying to make arrangements in regard to it.

SIR ROBERT BEST.—I am glad to hear that statement. This certainly is an anomaly which should not be permitted to continue, particularly in view of the policy of the Government and the anxiety expressed by this House that the utmost consideration should be extended to Great Britain.

There is another feature of the postal rates to which I wish to draw attention. During the war a super-tax of 6d. was imposed on various parcels arriving through the post from overseas. Attached to each parcel was a special label bearing a 6d. war-tax stamp. The war is over.

MR. AUSTIN CHAPMAN.—The charge is illegal now.

SIR ROBERT BEST.—But this super-tax has not been remitted. The Department have simply removed the word "war" from these labels. The postal officials claim that, since these parcels contain something of a commercial character, and therefore entail additional handling, such, for instance, as investigation by officers of the Customs Department, and storage, in the circumstances the additional rate of 6d. per parcel is justified; but I would point out that the postal rates covered all this. The tax was imposed for a specific purpose, and the reason for its imposition having passed away, the tax itself should pass away. At any rate, the Department should at least confine the extra charge to that particular class of parcel which contains goods for commercial purposes instead of making it applicable to a number of parcels which cannot come under the definition of "commercial purposes," and causing considerable annoyance to those to whom the packages are forwarded.

MR. AUSTIN CHAPMAN.—Under the Postal Union the impost to which the honorable member refers is forbidden. It was imposed under the guise of a war tax.

SIR ROBERT BEST.—It was imposed under the guise of a war tax, and has been extended to times of peace. The word "war" has been struck out, but the tax of 6d. per parcel still remains.

MR. WEST.—The same position applies in Sydney; and I am informed that the reason for continuing the charge is the fact that people are making use of the parcels post to send goods to Australia at a cheap rate.

SIR ROBERT BEST.—But that reason also applied before the imposition of the extra tax. Apparently the parcels post operations of the Department have proved so successful that business has increased largely in volume. That fact, however, cannot be set down as a reason for increasing rates. In other commercial



enterprises, if the volume of trade increases, they are usually able to reduce overhead charges.

**MR. WATKINS.**—Does the honorable member approve of people sending goods through the post in this way?

**SIR ROBERT BEST.**—It is a valuable facility to the public. The Post Office is justified in offering conveniences and facilities to the public, and has adjusted its ordinary rates to that end. There is no complaint on that score. It was a successful move on the part of the Department to provide facilities for parcels trade, and its business has increased more and more in volume, but the Department do not appear to be very anxious to take off this particular war tax. It is clear that when they initiated the parcels post business they charged a rate of postage which was intended to cover the cost of handling and storage.

**MR. AUSTIN CHAPMAN.**—That is so. All costs were included.

**SIR ROBERT BEST.**—Yet, on top of the original impost, they charge this super-tax, adopting the very short-sighted policy of penalizing a successful branch of their business. The reason for the super-tax having disappeared, there should be no longer need to penalize this particular branch of trade, and the mercantile community and the general public, who benefit by the facility afforded by the Department for posting parcels, should be relieved of this extra impost. It is particularly oppressive in the case of people who receive packages, the contents of which cannot come under the definition of "goods of a commercial character." I ask the Postmaster-General to look into these two matters I have brought under his attention.

**MR. POYNTON.**—I have made a note of them.

**SIR ROBERT BEST.**—I beg of him to rectify with every reasonable speed the anomaly of charging the Mother Country more for her postage rates on parcels than we charge the foreigner. I ask him also to investigate the extra parcels impost.

**MR. WEST** (East Sydney) [4.17].—If there is any branch of Commonwealth activity in which the people should take an interest it is the administration of the Post and Telegraph Department. The honorable member for Nepean (Mr. Bowden) has advanced no reason, other

than sentimental reasons, for asking for reduced postage rates. Sentiment will not assist the Commonwealth out of its financial difficulties. I have not found many people anxious for reductions in the postage rates. The great mass of the people with whom I am associated, the industrialists of Australia, do not make much use of the Postal Department; their stamp bill in twelve months is very small; but I am sure that, rather than have a reduction of the postage on letters, they would prefer to see the twopenny stamp retained, so that postal facilities might be given to people in country districts. It is a well known fact that the Department suffers a loss in conveying a letter from Sydney to Bourke, 600 miles away, for 2d., and that it relies upon the profit made by carrying letters in the metropolitan areas of Australia to pay for the extra cost of forwarding mail matter to country people. For a number of years now it has been usual with many of us here to bombard the Postmaster-General, whoever he might be, with questions as to why this or that postal matter is not attended to. For instance, two or three years ago, during a drought, the mail contractors in the country were unable, with the allowance that was paid them, to feed their horses, much less themselves, and many representations were made on their behalf in order to insure them better treatment. We were told, however, that there was no money available to make the allowances more liberal. My own opinion is that there are no mail contractors, postmasters, or other officials receiving any considerable emoluments from the Department. Of course, we know that storekeepers and others engage in such work more for the sake of attracting customers to their own places of business than anything else; but, at the same time, I think they ought to receive more consideration. In view of all the facts, I find myself unable to support this motion. I have an idea that this cry for cheap postage is more on the part of newspaper proprietors and others who are personally interested. Some years ago there was a great fuss raised by certain members of the New South Wales Parliament on behalf of the people in the country, who, it was said, required cheap postage in order to be supplied with literature, but my idea is that *Tit-bits* and literature of that kind, which is so largely read, is not sent through the post,

but by the railways. I have found it impossible to follow and appreciate the figures submitted by the Postmaster-General (Mr. Poynton) to-day. They are the usual Commonwealth figures, of a size which makes one feel thunder-struck. In 'Treasurers' statements, both Commonwealth and State, the accounts are presented in such a way—and, I believe, designedly—that no ordinary person can understand them. In New South Wales for a number of years the Railways Commissioners returned £500,000 or £600,000 after paying all charges, and this balance was paid into the revenue, and the result there, as everywhere when that practice is followed, was that if any supplies were required they were purchased out of loan account. In the case of the Post Office we find that practice followed, according to the Postmaster-General to-day, and I cannot regard it as proper financing. I ask leave to continue my remarks on a future occasion.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

## MEETING OF PARLIAMENT AT CANBERRA.

Mr. AUSTIN CHAPMAN (Eden-Monaro) [4.30].—I move—

That, in the opinion of this House, His Majesty's Ministers of State for the Commonwealth should, after the prorogation of the session of Parliament in 1923, advise His Excellency the Governor-General to summon the session to be held in 1924 at Canberra, the Federal Capital.

I make no apology to provincial Victorians for introducing this motion. The only question which we have to discuss now is whether the summoning of Parliament at Canberra is practicable, and I hold the view that it is, despite the opposition that is always offered to any proposal of the kind by a few provincials who think that when they climb a post-office tower in Victoria they see the world. I think that after twenty years we might well keep the compact that was made with New South Wales. We know what is said by those who oppose our removal to the Federal Capital and express opinions about the place, but who never take the trouble to go there. It is a fact, however, that nearly every one who has gone to Canberra with feelings of hostility towards removing Parliament to that

place, have returned converted to the idea. I extend a very warm invitation to the honorable member for Kooyong (Sir Robert Best) to visit Canberra, notwithstanding the many bitter things he has said about it, and in that invitation I include the honorable member for Indi (Mr. Robert Cook).

Mr. ROBERT COOK. — Are you aware that I spent a week travelling over the territory there?

Mr. AUSTIN CHAPMAN.—If so, it seems to have done the honorable member very little good. The honorable member for Kooyong, however, makes it a sort of boast that he has never been there, and does not intend to go. We have spent several millions of money there, and now I think it is only reasonable that we should get into our own home and thus honour the compact, and this latter is the main object of this motion. We should not then be under the domination of provincial newspapers. In this city we have the contents of the *Argus* and the *Age* rammed down our throats every day. People in the other States, who find it necessary to transact business in or through Parliament are placed at a great disadvantage compared with the residents of Victoria, and particularly of Melbourne, who have merely to walk up the street to Parliament House. I repeat once more that there is a very provincial atmosphere where the Federal Parliament now meets. As I have already indicated, the time has passed for discussing whether we ought to remove ourselves to Canberra. It is admitted by all that we are bound to go there, and it is only a question of the time. My contention is that it is quite practicable to go in 1924, and the only way that can be brought about is by an instruction to the Government. If honorable members have houses to live in and a large hall to meet in, with the comforts of life that people have there now, they ought to be satisfied. It might be left to members of Parliament to provide themselves with conveniences that are not there now. Last week we passed a resolution providing for the building of a hostel for members and the public, and there are other centres at hand where good hotel accommodation can be found. To give the Federal Capital



a fair start, we need to have the Parliament meeting there. Once the Parliament goes to Canberra, it cannot be removed. That is one reason why I have submitted this motion.

In order that the Commonwealth Parliament may meet at Canberra, certain temporary buildings must be erected. I have made inquiries this morning from architects and other professional men in the Department of Works and Railways, and have been informed by them that the present proposal is to erect a temporary Parliament House at an estimated cost of £120,000. We do not look for the immediate erection of palatial marble halls such as may ultimately grace the Capital. What we want are temporary buildings, which will be erected of brick, and will be devoid of elaborate ornamentation. When no longer required for the purposes of the Parliament, they will be adaptable to other purposes. Plans for these buildings are in course of preparation, and are almost ready for submission to the Public Works Committee. It is estimated by the officials that a temporary Parliament House such as I have just described can be erected at a cost of £120,000, and can be completed within eighteen months. I therefore see no reason why Parliament should not be able to meet at Canberra in 1924. This Parliament, as a rule, meets in the middle of the year; so that, in the event of my motion being carried, the Government would have two years within which to make the necessary arrangements to give effect to it. Once we definitely fix a date within which the Parliament shall meet at the Federal Capital the Department of Works and Railways, with the display of a little enterprise, will be able to have erected within that time the buildings necessary for our accommodation. We already have a railway to the very heart of Canberra.

Mr. MAXWELL.—Where is the heart of Canberra?

Mr. AUSTIN CHAPMAN.—Certainly not in Victoria. I do not know whether the honorable member puts the question by way of a joke, or whether he wishes to cross-examine me.

Mr. MAXWELL.—I went to the Capital and enjoyed the visit, but I do not remember seeing the centre of Canberra.

Mr. AUSTIN CHAPMAN.—I hope I shall have the pleasure of seeing my honorable friend once more in Canberra. I

feel satisfied that the buildings necessary to enable the Parliament to meet there can be erected within the time mentioned by me. Some people seem to think that no real work has been done there. I would remind the House that the Federal Territory comprises 900 square miles of country, or 576,000 acres. We commenced operations there in 1911, and construction work started in 1913. The war naturally retarded operations to a very considerable extent; but during the nine years that have elapsed since the work of constructing the Capital was entered upon much greater progress should have been made. Already, however, a magnificent water supply has been provided. It is estimated that the scheme is capable of supplying 700,000 people. We have plenty of water and plenty of good land in the Territory. For the most part, this land is now being used for depasturing sheep and cattle, when, as a matter of fact, it should be carrying a large population.

Mr. LAZZARINI.—It is lying idle.

Mr. AUSTIN CHAPMAN.—Practically lying idle. We talk frequently of the need of closer settlement, and the desirableness of bringing more people to Australia; yet the Federal Government has done practically nothing to settle people on this area of splendid country, which is eminently suitable for closer settlement. There is a railway, as I have said, to the heart of the Capital; the district has a good rainfall, and the construction of a few miles of railway between Yass Junction and Canberra and a connexion with Jervis Bay would not only assist settlers there to get their produce to market, but would enable the produce of the Riverina to be conveyed to one of the most magnificent ports in Australia for shipment overseas. Some honorable members talk freely about the need for decentralization; here they have a means of helping on the movement.

In addition to a splendid water supply, we have already installed at Canberra a 1,770 horse-power electric power and lighting scheme. We have within the Territory 92 miles of roads formed and made, 88 miles of roads gravelled and metalled, and 155 miles of roads repaired, with water-tables and drains. Within the city area itself we have some splendid roadways. We have 14 miles of roadways formed, 6 miles metalled, and 6 miles

under construction. Excluding the Dunroon College, which in itself is a little township, we have eighty buildings, nearly all of brick, a power house—one of the largest in Australia—and a number of very nice brick cottages.

Mr. PROWSE.—What about the brick yards?

Mr. AUSTIN CHAPMAN.—We also have brick yards where millions of bricks are stacked ready for use. Then, again, we have thousands of feet of seasoned timber at Canberra. And yet men are walking the country in search of employment. We are told that not only unskilled labourers but many skilled workers in the building trade are out of employment. Here is an opportunity to do something for them. We have in the Territory, I repeat, 576,000 acres of land owned by the Commonwealth Government, and that vast area is not being put to one-tenth of its capacity.

Having regard to all these facts, I think we should make a special effort to house the Federal Parliament at Canberra at the earliest possible moment. I have specially specified the year 1924 so as to give the Government two years—

Sir ROBERT BEST.—Without the option.

Mr. AUSTIN CHAPMAN.—The honorable member has earned the distinction of being an out-and-out opponent of Canberra, but he has never advanced any reason why the Federal Parliament should not meet there except that he does not want to leave his beloved Melbourne. In view of the caning which the honorable member received in the House a few days ago at the hands of the Minister for Works and Railways (Mr. Richard Foster) I shall say no more of his attitude on this question. I would say to the Minister, "Give the people a chance. Throw open this area so that men with a little capital may go there and make homes for themselves. Give the people an opportunity to settle on the lands of the Territory and to establish farms and orchards for themselves." Splendid fruit can be grown there. Many small investors would gladly avail themselves of the chance to erect shops in the Capital and to establish little businesses for themselves. We do not want Canberra to be run on Socialistic lines. Our desire is that private enterprise shall be given a chance.

Mr. LISTER.—By setting out with a proposal to erect a "pub." at a cost of £80,000.

Mr. AUSTIN CHAPMAN.—The honorable member seems to be very anxious in regard to the erection of a hostel, or "pub.," as he calls it, at the Capital. I am told by the Minister that it is not going to be a public-house. It is going to be "dry."

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—Who said so?

Mr. AUSTIN CHAPMAN.—I was referring to the Minister charged with the administration of the Territory, and not to the Minister for Works and Railways (Mr. Richard Foster), who has simply to see that the requisite buildings are erected at Canberra. The honorable gentleman's conversion, by the way, is in itself something at which to marvel. He candidly admitted in the House last week that he had condemned Canberra before he had seen it, but having visited the Territory, he was now convinced that his earlier judgment was unsound. There is an old saying, and a very good one, that "wise men change their opinions; fools never." I was surprised to hear some honorable members of the Country party say that they would never change their opinion with regard to the Federal Capital.

Mr. MAHONY.—The honorable member for Kooyong (Sir Robert Best) will not.

Mr. AUSTIN CHAPMAN.—I have great hopes of his conversion. This, however, is a question which should be seriously considered. I do not propose to detain the House at any length, since I know there are many good friends of Canberra who wish to speak to the motion. We are also anxious to obtain a vote to-night. Our policy is "Work, not talk." I look forward to the Parliament meeting at Canberra in 1924. The necessary buildings, other than the Parliament House itself, can be erected within twelve months. The honorable member for South Sydney (Mr. Riley), who is a practical builder and was Chairman of the Public Works Committee, has examined the plans and tells me that the buildings can be erected within that time. Funds have been voted for the purpose, and there is no reason why the work should not be proceeded with without further delay.



If this House instructs the Minister for Works and Railways to prepare for the Parliament meeting at Canberra in 1924, he will do so. Further dilly-dallying with the building of the Federal Capital will lead to either this or some other Government being defeated. I have no desire to see the present Government turned out of office, and I hope they will take warning and realize that the will of honorable members is that we should get out of Melbourne as quickly as possible and take up our residence in the permanent home of the Parliament. I have great pleasure in commending my motion to the approval of the House.

**Mr. MAHONY** (Dalley) [4.50].—It is about time, after all these years of waiting, that Parliament definitely decided to take up its residence at Canberra. One of the first principles laid down in connexion with the formation of the Federation was that the Commonwealth should have its own separate Capital. It was felt that our Federal laws should be enacted altogether apart from State influences and Inter-State jealousies. I would be as much opposed to the proposition to make Sydney or any other of the State capitals the Seat of the Commonwealth Government as I would object to Melbourne being so placed. The same conditions that one finds so objectionable here would exist in any of the other capitals; the same disabilities would be felt with just as much force in Sydney. Unconsciously, members are swayed in their judgment by the weight of the State atmosphere surrounding them in a State capital. Our environments inevitably mould our characters. It is our task to legislate for the people of the Commonwealth, and not in the interests of those of any particular State.

**Mr. MAXWELL**.—Hear, hear! But can the honorable member mention any legislation that has been influenced by the fact that the Federal Parliament sits in Melbourne rather than in Canberra?

**Mr. MAHONY**.—I can, indeed; and I can point to no more striking example of the influence of the State atmosphere, the "pull" of the Melbourne press, than is provided by the honorable member himself. Day after day, in all he says and does, one perceives how his attitude in Parliament is based upon the lead of

the Melbourne newspapers. It may be unconscious, I do not say that it is not; but the fact remains. After having read the Melbourne papers, Victorian representatives use slab after slab from the leading articles in their speeches day by day. All the other States have a right to demand that legislation affecting their interests shall be enacted apart from the undue influence exerted in Melbourne. We can only hope to work in the true Federal spirit and atmosphere, and for the true Australian ideal, when our Parliament has been established in the Federal Capital City, in the heart of the Federal Territory. The reason why I am an ardent advocate of the establishment of the Capital at Canberra is summed up in the phrase "Inter-State jealousies and parochial bias." The people of the Commonwealth desire to get away from such evil influences. They wish our Commonwealth legislation to be enacted in the interests of all rather than for any one section or city. We should decide to-day that the Federal Capital can be, and shall be, established, and that Parliament shall meet there by 1924. I have great pleasure in supporting the motion, and in acknowledging the unselfish devotion to this cause of the honorable member for Eden-Monaro (Mr. Austin Chapman).

We have a great example in the American nation. Before the establishment of Washington as the capital of the United States of America that country was torn by State jealousies and riven by local prejudices. The true advocates of an all-Australian sentiment to-day are called upon to wage just the same fight that the true Americans, with their all-America ideals, had to make in order to establish their Legislature at Washington. How can we hope to make Australia great when there are men in the National Parliament who will do everything possible to hinder and postpone their transfer to the Federal Capital, because of petty, selfish interests? The reason for some honorable members opposing the motion will be found to be a matter of purely personal inconvenience. Among our opponents will be found certain honorable members who, because they are engaged in a certain profession in this city, may have to forgo portion of their remunerations in order to attend the Federal Parliament in its true home. The people of

all the States complain of the present position of affairs. The Victorian public have just as much to complain of. Citizens of Melbourne realize that the Commonwealth Parliament legislates for the whole of the people of Australia. If our laws are unduly influenced by the claims and the clamour of the Melbourne section, those laws are still the laws which govern the people of Melbourne just as they do the citizens of every other part of the Commonwealth. Surely Melbourne folk do not wish to see laws enacted which have been influenced by a little Melbourne clique!

With respect to the practical side of the motion, the honorable member for Eden-Monaro has clearly demonstrated the possibility of this Parliament meeting at Canberra within the time specified. The Capital can be brought into active being by 1924. We have the brickworks already successfully operating, and but a small section of railway requires to be constructed from Yass in order to link up the Capital with the chief centres of the Commonwealth. A splendid water supply has already been provided, and other basic services are being constructed. A power-house has been built which is capable of lighting a city three times the size of Melbourne. We have at Canberra the essentials for the establishment of a great city. All that is now wanted is the breathing of the breath of life into the constitutional project, when the Federal Capital will become a truly living entity.

**Sir ROBERT BEST** (Kooyong) [5.0].—I do not wonder that the honorable members who have spoken to the motion should have impressed upon the House the necessity for treating it seriously. It is difficult to do so, however. The motion is one which would disregard every practical consideration merely to gratify a sentiment. I was disappointed, while listening to the somewhat vindictive and unworthy remarks of the honorable member for Dalley (Mr. Mahony). He referred to a Melbourne clique, and to its machinations in the direction of defeating the noble ideals of the Federal Capital. Apparently, however, the honorable member forgets the machinations of the Sydney clique. "Inter-State jealousies" are the stock-in-trade of the Canberra movement, and that stock-in-trade is being hawked, advertised and unblushingly used by a

clique in Sydney. Some time ago this Sydney clique made a piteous appeal for the sum of £1,000 for propaganda purposes, in order to make the Federal Capital cry a live one. A circular was issued, and "Inter-State jealousies" were relied upon as the chief factor for stimulating the great cause.

**Mr. MAHONY.**—Will the honorable member wait until I show him a circular issued by the Melbourne clique? I have it here.

**Sir ROBERT BEST.**—I know something, at any rate, of the Sydney clique. The mass of the people of New South Wales are not concerned about Canberra. Like the rest of the citizens of Australia, they prefer, before all things, that our overwhelming burden of taxation shall be lightened. They desire, chiefly, that our financial affairs shall be put in order. At the present time we have not the money available for the construction of the Federal Capital. The circular containing the appeal for £1,000 was signed by ex-Judge Heydon, and it contains deliberate mis-statements.

**Mr. MAHONY.**—This circular of the Melbourne clique has the honorable member's name attached to it.

**Sir ROBERT BEST.**—Anything that bears my name I am prepared to honour. All this propaganda work on the part of the junta of Sydney members in this House originates with the activities of the Sydney clique. There was no life whatever in the "Canberra cry" until the appeal was issued for the sum of £1,000 to assist in the work of propaganda. I suppose that the £1,000 was secured, and that the leading spirits in the Sydney clique thereupon set to work and galvanized the whole sorry business. I do not mistake their propaganda, however, for the true voice of the people of New South Wales; the latter are totally indifferent on the subject at the present moment. Reproachful reference has been made this afternoon to the matter of dishonouring the contract with New South Wales. There has never been a suggestion or desire to do so. That honorable contract was constitutionally imposed, and is one, therefore, which must be observed. But it was never contemplated that we should have to beg, borrow, and steal in order to honour it.



Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—What year would the honorable member say should be the proper time for the Federal Parliament to meet in Canberra? Forty years hence?

Sir ROBERT BEST.—When we have reduced taxation to normality, and when the cost of labour is reasonably normal, let us by all means proceed with the construction of the Capital. But at a time when for every £100 worth of work under normal conditions we have to pay £180, to proceed with that project would be a sheer, wanton, and disgraceful waste of money, which we cannot afford. With one statement made by the honorable member for Eden-Monaro I am in perfect accord. He said, "Let the public have a chance." That is exactly what I say. If he desires to learn the state of public feeling on this subject, let him refer it to the people at the next election, and allow them to decide whether we shall at this juncture incur a further waste of millions of pounds in the present financial state of affairs on the so-called Federal Capital. If that be done, the honorable member will get an answer that will surprise him considerably.

Mr. MAHONY.—It will paralyze the honorable member.

Sir ROBERT BEST.—It will be more likely to paralyze other honorable members. What is the use of saying that there is plenty of land and water at Canberra? Man cannot live on land and water alone. The motion asks us to fix an arbitrary date when this Parliament shall be transferred to Canberra. Yet the one-sided Advisory Committee, which was appointed for the purpose of finding some scheme or means by which the proposed transfer could be clothed with some semblance of sanity—

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—Does the honorable member say that that Committee was one-sided?

Sir ROBERT BEST.—Undoubtedly it was. It was appointed for a specific purpose, as set out in its report.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—I wish the honorable member were half as genuine as were the members of the Committee.

Sir ROBERT BEST.—That Committee had all their ingenuity concentrated upon determining, in accordance with the dictation of the Sydney junta, meekly carried out through the agency of the

Government, the earliest date at which this Parliament could proceed to Canberra. The Committee report that, after £1,800,000 has been expended, it will be possible to get there in three years.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—Why does the honorable member say that the Committee was one-sided?

Sir ROBERT BEST.—Let the Minister examine the Committee's report.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—Let the honorable member examine it, and he will find himself steeped in prejudice.

Sir ROBERT BEST.—Whatever prejudice I may have in regard to this matter was formerly shared in full by the Minister, but now his zeal, like that of all converts, knows no limit. The Advisory Committee reported about September, 1921—

The period of three years assigned by the Committee for the first stage is the minimum that the resources in material and labour would permit without unduly increasing the cost.

Mr. BOWDEN.—One of the three years has passed.

Sir ROBERT BEST.—And practically nothing has been done.

Mr. MAHONY.—Has the honorable member been to Canberra?

Sir ROBERT BEST.—I have not. I am not disputing for the moment the eligibility of Canberra as the site for the Federal Capital. I am assuming, for present purposes, that it is equal to all that has been said of it as to suitability. My objection is that we have not got the money, and this Parliament should have the courage to face that fact. Demands are made for increased postal services, and the reply of the Treasurer is "no money." Demands are made for increased old-age pensions, and the reply is, "No money." And to all demands for productive works the reply of the Government is, "We have not any money to spare; oh no! of course not. Canberra must get it all." There is no money for all the important purposes that I have mentioned because Canberra stands in the way. According to the report of the Advisory Committee, after having expended £1,800,000, we can partially transfer to Canberra in three years. The Committee points out how at first the administration will have to be divided between Melbourne and Canberra, and that means that the public will have to

submit to a wicked inconvenience and expense in order to satisfy this fetish of certain honorable members. There is the conclusive evidence of expert advisers who were deliberately appointed to discover the earliest moment at which Parliament could be transferred to Canberra, that we cannot go there in less than three years. The Committee suggested that there will be two stages—the first in three years, when we can partially transfer and submit the public to all the inconveniences of divided administration, and the second stage after another three years, and the expenditure of an additional £1,300,000. In other words, we are to commit the Commonwealth to the expenditure of upwards of £3,000,000 at this critical moment in our financial affairs for the purpose of the erection of temporary buildings for an unnecessary and inconvenient transfer of the Federal Administration to Canberra. The motion is childish and entirely impracticable. There is no justification for the suggestion that Canberra can be ready for the reception of this Parliament in three years' time unless we are prepared to live in tents and suffer gross inconvenience. The motion is not worthy of the serious consideration of the House.

**Mr. RILEY** (South Sydney) [5.16].—The remarks of the honorable member for Kooyong (Sir Robert Best) are convincing proof that no matter what the circumstances were he would oppose the transfer to Canberra. He has admitted that £1,800,000 had been already expended at Canberra.

**Mr. ROBERT COOK**.—Wasted!

**Mr. RILEY**.—The honorable member wastes his time in this House; he should be back on his poultry farm. Already £1,800,000 has been spent in doing the pioneer work of a new city, and the honorable member for Kooyong says that it would be waste of money to spend a further £120,000 upon the erection of two temporary buildings in which Parliament could meet. Is it not a waste of money to allow the works which have been already carried out at an expense of £1,800,000 to remain unutilized for the sake of a further £120,000? As a matter of fact, the proposal now before the House is an economical one. If Parliament meets in Canberra the 900 square miles comprised in the Federal Territory

will increase in value, and as the new city grows the rents from land will be more than sufficient to counterbalance the expense which the occupation of the Capital will involve. I admit that we are indebted to the Victorian Parliament and people for allowing us to use the parliamentary building in which we are at present accommodated, but we cannot continue as guests in this building for ever. This Parliament, with the largest revenue of any authority in the Commonwealth, and dealing with big national questions, should if it is to be a Parliament worthy of the Commonwealth, occupy its own House built in its own Territory. It is all very well for the honorable member for Kooyong to say that there is no money available. That is a cry that can be raised at any time. The honorable member suggested that increased pensions to the aged and invalid people were refused because of the demands of Canberra, but I think that when the honorable member had an opportunity to vote for an increase of the pensions he voted against it.

**Sir ROBERT BEST**.—I did nothing of the kind.

**Mr. RILEY**.—Honorable members on this side proposed an increase in the pensions, and we received no support from honorable members sitting behind the Government. However, the only question before the House is whether Parliament can be transferred to Canberra in the time mentioned in the motion. I say that it can. Even the building which we at present occupy could be built in twelve months, but it is not proposed to start at Canberra with a building nearly as elaborate as this. The Commonwealth Bank in Sydney, comprising ten stories, was built in less than twelve months. All the pioneering work has been done at Canberra; bricks are available on the spot, the water mains are only a few miles away, and light and power are already provided. If the Government were anxious that this Parliament should meet at Canberra, it could be done at once. On the other hand, if they wish to delay the transfer, all they need do is to say, "We believe in keeping the compact with the people in New South Wales, but not just now." Faith ought to be kept with the people of that



State. Western Australia and South Australia have claimed that certain railways promised to them should be built, and the Federal Parliament has a right to carry out the agreement in respect to those works. The people of New South Wales entered the Federation on the understanding that the Federal Seat of Government should be in their State, and there has been ample time for carrying out the compact in that respect. Most of the area enclosed in the Federal Territory has been given to the Commonwealth by the State of New South Wales, and when it is thrown open, and there is a large population in the city of Canberra, the revenue derived from land rents should be sufficient to cover the cost of administration. We should not hesitate about getting to Canberra as speedily as possible. Our anxiety to do so is no reflection upon the people of Victoria, to whom the Commonwealth owes a deep debt of gratitude. If the Commonwealth Government want money with which to build a city at Canberra, I am sure that the people of New South Wales would find it for them.

MR. ATKINSON.—The proper method is to turn the whole concern over to a Commission, who will find the money and build the city.

MR. RILEY.—That method would merely delay matters. How much would Tasmania contribute—that little State which always wants so much and gives nothing in return?

MR. ATKINSON.—That statement is not correct. The people of Tasmania would have to bear their share of the cost of building the Federal Capital.

MR. RILEY.—Why will not the opponents of Canberra fix a date for the meeting of the Federal Parliament there, and thus give the people of New South Wales something to go on? The New South Wales representatives in this House cannot be blamed for attempting to force matters. They are pledged to do so. The question is not a dead one, as the honorable member for Kooyong says it is. On the other hand, it is a very live question in New South Wales, and it is not made prominent by reason of the expenditure of money. At every meeting candidates for the Federal Parliament are asked when the Federal Parliament is to be transferred to Canberra.

MR. FOLEY.—It is not a very live question in other States.

MR. RILEY.—I quite believe that, but the representatives of New South Wales cannot be blamed for standing up for the rights of their State.

MR. ATKINSON.—Hand the Territory over to a Commission.

MR. RILEY.—I believe that once we get to Canberra something will be done in that direction. I can assure the honorable member for Kooyong that he is wrong when he says that our agitation is influenced by a small clique in Sydney. On the contrary, it is a very widespread movement. The whole of the New South Wales press are anxious for the transfer for which we are asking. No injury would be done to Victoria. On the other hand, it would be of advantage to the whole of the Commonwealth. In the United States of America the meeting of the Federal Houses of Parliament at Washington led to the establishment of a new city. Honorable members who represent country districts in this House claim that the cities of Australia are overcrowded. If we build a new city at Canberra it should serve the purpose of removing the surplus population from those "overcrowded cities." I am sure that this Parliament could meet at Canberra within two years without extra cost or inconvenience to honorable members. I have a book giving a short history of the Queensland Parliament. On the front is a photograph of the old Queensland Parliament House, a little structure that served its purpose for a number of years. The first Parliament House in Victoria was not very elaborate. Parliaments must make a start at some time in houses of their own. Why should not the Commonwealth Parliament do so? We would need nothing elaborate, but simply a place in which to carry on our business under healthy surroundings. The climate of Canberra is the best in the Commonwealth. The contour lines are such as to make the place attractive to visitors. I am confident that once the city gets going it will become one of the most prominent centres in Australia. Honorable members may delay the transfer for a few years, but it must come in time. The Commonwealth has already spent so much money at Canberra that it would not be justified in abandoning its operations there.

MR. BOWDEN (Nepean) [5.28].—I was pained at the outburst of the honorable member for Kooyong (Sir Robert

Best). He said, at the opening of his speech, that he did not think that the question under consideration was a serious one, but the manner in which he handled it showed that he himself regarded it as serious.

Mr. MATHEWS.—Did he not take a broad national view of the question?

Mr. BOWDEN.—He talked of Inter-State jealousy, but he was the very first person to raise that boggy, by some insinuation about a "Sydney clique," which he used as justification for the observation that the movement in favour of this Parliament meeting at Canberra was not deserving of the support of the House. Every time the honorable member has spoken on this question he has raised the old boggy of Inter-State jealousy. His only arguments are of this trumpety nature. He talks of Inter-State jealousy, about the time not being ripe, and about the insufficiency of funds, just the very same argument as is used by every fraudulent bankrupt, who declares that he intends to pay his debts at some time, that is, when it is convenient for him to do so. The question of "when" is to be left, not to the decision of the people to whom the promise was made, but to that of the men who made the promise. The honorable member for Kooyong says that no date was fixed in the agreement with the people of New South Wales. We all know that such is the case, but the honorable member can tell us from his practical experience that the fact that no date has been fixed in an agreement does not invalidate such an agreement, but is interpreted to mean "a reasonable time." The honorable member has been in this House and in another Chamber for twenty-one years, but never yet has he said what is "a reasonable time" for the carrying out of the compact with the people of New South Wales. The arguments he uses to-day are those he used twenty years ago. He simply "rings the changes" on the same old arguments. He uses fresh illustrations, but the same old "dope," every time he speaks. He says, "The financial circumstances do not permit." "We are disregarding every practical consideration." "It is a piteous sentimental appeal." The greatest things in the world have arisen from sentiment. Common honesty is merely sentiment, but it is that upon which we move and live. The motive underlying our every activity is

sentiment. The honorable member laughs when he says, "It is mere sentiment." If we were without sentiment we would be as the beasts of the field. The honorable member says that there was never any suggestion of dishonoring the agreement with New South Wales. There are two ways of dishonoring an agreement, either by repudiating it in a straight-out way, or by postponing its fulfilment. A man says that he does not dishonour his bill when he comes the day before it is due for the purpose of renewing it. Nevertheless, he does not discharge his debt, and may be, like Mr. Micawber, he says, "Thank God, that is settled," and signs another promissory note. Surely, after twenty years, the time has come for us to ask the honorable member for Kooyong when he proposes to do something practical. Surely a "reasonable time" has elapsed. The honorable member objects to the fixing of an arbitrary date.

Mr. WATKINS.—America had only thirteen years.

Mr. BOWDEN.—The experience of the American Parliament was that, owing to Inter-State jealousies, there was no chance of getting to Washington until a date was fixed, whereupon the Senate, which was the stronger House of the two, passed a motion directing its President to convene the next meeting of the Chamber at Washington. The American legislators accordingly went to Washington, although they suffered all sorts of inconvenience; but they took very good care that they were not inconvenienced for long.

Mr. MATHEWS.—The only way in which you can get Victorians to Canberra is to make them go.

Mr. BOWDEN.—The time has certainly come when we should fix a date for transferring this Parliament to Canberra. This House should say, "We are going there on such-and-such a day." We have reached that stage in the development of the Territory at which our location plans are being thrown open to the public for building purposes. If we are to derive rents from city sites, the men who are to take up those sites and build upon them must have an assurance that Parliament will meet at Canberra within



a certain time. As the honorable member for Eden-Monaro (Mr. Austin Chapman) has said, we should give the public a chance of building and investing their money at Canberra. I believe that if we were prepared to say we were going to Canberra on a specific date we should find business men quite willing to invest their capital, but we cannot expect them to take any interest unless we give such an assurance. We were told the other day by the Minister (Mr. Richard Foster) that we could get to Canberra within three years, and I believe that if the House would say that the removal should be made within a certain time, the place would go ahead, and money would at once be invested by private interests. I remind honorable members that it is a very short-sighted policy, from a financial stand-point, to spend £2,000,000 in preparatory work and then not spend a small balance in doing what is required to make the work effective. We cannot expect the water supply, sewerage, and the railways to pay at this stage; if you carry out such works and there is no city, of course the scheme cannot pay. There is nearly £200,000 invested in the sewerage, which we have been asked to complete, and we cannot expect a return until it is completed. There is money invested in the waterworks, but water cannot pay if it is running to waste. There is money invested in the brickworks, and millions of bricks are waiting to be used. But as to the other £900,000 or so invested in lands, the Commonwealth is now receiving between 7 and 8 per cent.—not a bad investment from a Commonwealth point of view. That part of the scheme is paying its way, and costs the Commonwealth nothing. The expenditure out of loan moneys will, of course, mean the paying of interest, and the sooner the works thus constructed are completed the sooner we shall get a return. I have no doubt whatever that Canberra is going to be a most paying proposition.

MR. RICHARD FOSTER.—I forget the figures, but there is a considerable revenue already.

MR. BOWDEN.—That is so; and Canberra, in my opinion, will prove a property of which we shall be proud. It is bad economy to leave things half or three-quarters done, when the expenditure of

a comparatively small sum of money will make the works reproductive. It must be remembered that we are paying considerable rentals in Melbourne and other cities in connexion with the services that were transferred. According to the return obtained by the honorable member for Melbourne (Dr. Maloney), the Commonwealth is paying about £180,000 a year in rentals for different premises in the Commonwealth. That return is hard to analyze, and it is difficult to ascertain how much of these rents would be saved by a transfer of our services to Canberra. We can take it for granted, however, that a very considerable proportion would be saved.

The honorable member for Kooyong (Sir Robert Best) talked much about the waste of money at Canberra, but the report of the Advisory Board, which he quoted, shows that very little has been wasted. On the other hand it shows that it has been well expended, and the work well done. Indeed, that is one of the most satisfactory clauses of the report. I was very glad indeed to read it. There was, I know, a dispute as to whether money had been wasted on the sewerage, but Mr. de Burgh, who is a great authority on the matter, has expressed the opinion that this work was well done.

The honorable member for Kooyong (Sir Robert Best) made most slighting references to the temporary buildings which are proposed, but in reality the buildings are not temporary, though the uses to which they will be applied may be. If the first Parliament House is built, as proposed on, I think, the museum site, then, when the main parliamentary building is erected, the temporary building will not be useless, because it will be incorporated in the other buildings on the museum site.

MR. MAXWELL.—Is it proposed that the building to be used as a temporary Parliament House shall become part of the permanent structure?

MR. BOWDEN.—No; but it will be part of the permanent structure of the museum, or one of the other buildings. I have no desire to labour the question; indeed, I should not have spoken at all had it not been for the remarks of the honorable member for Kooyong. We get tired of the repetition of the old stale arguments, and hope in vain for something fresh, and I merely rose in order to tell

that honorable member what I thought of his use of such arguments now. As to the practicability of our moving to Canberra in two years' time, I remind honorable members that the Board was of opinion that we could go there in three years. One year has already passed with the work proceeding all the time, and I see no reason why we should not be able to move in the time stated. I have asked leading builders and architects in Sydney their opinion on the point, and I am told that if we are prepared to go, Parliament could be sitting at Canberra in eighteen months. I can see no obstacle to the realization of the suggestion that Parliament should meet there in 1924.

**Mr. RICHARD FOSTER** (Wakefield—Minister for Works and Railways) [5.45].—I do not intend to take up much time. First, I wish to say that I am not in sympathy with the motion submitted by the honorable member for Eden-Monaro (Mr. Austin Chapman). Then I have to tell honorable members that the attitude of the Government is what I stated last week. The Government hope to go on continuously with this work, and as rapidly as prudence will permit. We do not intend to waste money, and to put unnecessary burdens on the people, if not for all time, at all events for a very considerable time. The cost involved is too great for us to "rush the business." It has been said by one honorable member that there are numbers of men out of work all over Australia. There are; but there are not big numbers of men in the building trade out of work.

**Mr. MAHONY.**—Yes, there are.

**Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.**—It has been my business quite recently to thoroughly inquire into this matter, and I find that, strange to say, it is only in Sydney where any large number of skilled workers in the building trade are out of employment.

**Mr. FLEMING.**—They are handy to Canberra!

**Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.**—Then why do they not go there, for I want them; we would push on, if men would go there and work on reasonable terms.

**Mr. MAHONY.**—Why not offer them jobs?

**Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.**—I went to New South Wales a week ago partly to inquire into this very question, and my opinion is that there is much building in

anticipation by private enterprise, but those concerned will not proceed to build at the present outrageous cost. Further there is a great deal of public building to be undertaken in Australia, and much of it is now waiting. Only a little while ago, we called for tenders for twenty houses, or cottages, as they might be called, and though we advertised in every State, we got the poor response of two tenders, both of which were about 80 per cent. above pre-war costs.

**Mr. FENTON.**—How much per cottage?

**Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.**—The tenders were about £1,000 for cottages which previous to the war could have been built for £500, or £600, at the very outside.

**Mr. GABB.**—Rush on with Canberra!

**Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.**—I am not going to "rush on" at such prices. I suggest to the honorable member for Eden-Monaro (Mr. Austin Chapman) that he should have regard to the divisions taken in the House last week, because I know that some of the votes were cast with a belief that we are not going to unnecessarily waste money by rushing this building while prices are so high. That is the position taken up by the Government, and it is an honest position, which was approved by some building firms in Sydney, and also by the newspapers there, when I visited the city last week.

**Mr. MAHONY.**—Who were those people?

**Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.**—Some of the building people, and some of the newspapers.

**Mr. MAHONY.**—Who were they?

**Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.**—The position was approved by the common sense of Sydney, and if the people professed otherwise, I would not believe in them. I am a personal friend of the honorable member for Kooyong, but I have no sympathy whatever with his attitude on this question, in regard to which he appears to be simply steeped in prejudice. Nor have I any sympathy with honorable members on the other side who would rush the building of the Capital under present conditions. The people of the other States outside Victoria are coming to recognise that the time has arrived when this provision in the Constitution for the building of the Capital should be honoured. Those people, however, would not approve of our rushing on with the



building of the Capital when building prices are from 70 per cent. to 80 per cent. above the pre-war rates. I do not think these high rates will continue much longer.

Mr. FLEMING.—When does the honorable gentleman think that building charges will come back? And to what extent they will fall?

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—Our experience in connexion with tenders for which we have called recently is that, except in New South Wales, prices are falling.

Mr. MCWILLIAMS.—Building costs in Melbourne have not come back to any extent.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—In some of the States there has been a considerable fall. The drop in this city is not of any extent; but tenders which were called recently for the erection of buildings in Victoria show that there is a tendency to come back. When building charges show a distinct tendency to come back to a reasonable point, I shall push on as vigorously as possible with the building of the Capital.

We ought to be fair in dealing with this project. The honorable member for Koo-yong (Sir Robert Best) carefully avoided pointing out that there was a revenue side to the question. The revenue derived from the Capital territory is not large, but it is coming along very nicely. Regard must also be had to the saving in respect of rents which would be effected by the accommodation of the administrative staffs in the Federal Capital. The building of Canberra is not the dark picture that some people would have us believe. For many reasons, I am as anxious as is any one to push on with the enterprise. For instance, we have there nearly 6,000,000 bricks. That means idle capital, which I do not like to see. As soon as we can obtain reasonable tenders, I shall push on with all these works with all energy consistent with prudence. I am not prepared, however, to throw money away recklessly. Neither the people of New South Wales nor of any other State wish that to be done. I would emphasize the point that it is impossible, without wasting money, to accept the advice of the honorable member for Eden-Monaro, and to accommodate the Parliament at the Federal Capital within the time mentioned by him.

Mr. RILEY.—What does the honorable member suggest?

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—That we meet at Canberra not later than the beginning of the Parliament after the next. If we can get there sooner, with due regard to economy, well and good; the sooner the better.

Mr. MAHONY.—We could be housed there within two years from the present time.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—Not without disregarding the people's interest, so far as the public purse is concerned. I am not going to erect these buildings on those terms. The honorable member for Eden-Monaro is an enthusiast who deserves to have a monument erected to his memory in the Capital. His name will never be forgotten there; but I would say to him, and to honorable members generally, that we cannot rush on with the building of the Capital along wasteful lines. Our desire is to push on as rapidly as possible with construction works on prudent and economic lines.

Mr. LAZZARINI (Werriwa) [5.55].—I do not think the House will accept the Minister's interpretation of the feeling of Sydney, or New South Wales as a whole, in regard to this matter. I do not know that he can claim to speak with authority on behalf of the people of the State. Judging by his speech this evening, the honorable gentleman is inclined to "slip" on his Canberra policy. It seems to me that he proposes to continue the old system of providing on the Estimates, from year to year, for an expenditure of £100,000 or £150,000 on the Federal Capital, and allowing about one-half of the annual vote to lapse. He evidently desires to lead the people of Australia to believe that he favours a forward policy in regard to Canberra, although he has no serious intention in that direction. If the honorable gentleman, when speaking this evening, was voicing the views of the Government, I am inclined to think that we still have what may be called an anti-Canberra Administration, and one that is not prepared to push on with the building of the Capital. He stated that only in Sydney was there any pronounced unemployment in the building trade, and that he would be glad if some of the men in the trade who could not find work there would go

to Canberra. Will the Minister undertake to employ skilled men in the building trade whom I can send to Canberra tomorrow? Will he guarantee them employment there?

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—Yes.

Mr. LAZZARINI.—Then I will supply the honorable gentleman with a list tomorrow.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—That is what I want.

Mr. LAZZARINI.—I undertake to supply the Minister with the names of a number of skilled tradesmen who have practically devoted half their lives to the building trade, and who would readily take up work at Canberra. I am pleased to have the Minister's assurance, since it means that I shall be able to find employment for a number of men.

This motion will serve to put the acid test, not only on the Government, but on all who claim to favour the establishment of the Capital without further delay. I was hopeful that the Government would agree to it. It seems to me that only by fixing a definite date within which the Parliament shall meet at Canberra can we put a clear-cut issue before the House. I do not intend to reiterate what has been said of the experience of the United States of America. Such an experience is common to all undertakings where practical results are desired. If the Government desire to continue to put off the honouring of the compact for the establishment of the Federal Capital, they could not do better than follow the policy enunciated to-night by the Minister, since it is one of procrastination. The honorable member for Kooyong (Sir Robert Best) asked why we should waste £200,000 on this proposal. He does not object to works and buildings at Canberra on which £2,000,000 have been expended lying unproductive. So long as there is no Canberra, it matters not to him whether or not £2,000,000 or even £3,000,000 of Federal property is allowed to deteriorate there. The best way to secure a population for the Federal Capital is to establish the Federal Parliament there. The honorable member for Eden-Monaro (Mr. Austin Chapman) spoke this afternoon of the thousands of acres of fertile land within the Territory that were lying practically idle. I would urge the Government to cut up that land

and to put the people on it. If that were done, it would give an impetus to the Capital city itself, and the Government would derive a big revenue from Crown rents in respect of business areas, with the ultimate result that the money so obtained would not only provide interest on capital expenditure, but permit of the establishment of a sinking fund which would wipe out the whole capital expenditure within a relatively brief period.

Reference has been made to private enterprise. In this case private enterprise must be given a chance. The Government are not going to conduct the hundred and one businesses which must be established in the Capital; they must be left to private enterprise.

Mr. LISTER.—Why was not the honorable member in favour of allowing private enterprise to build the hostel?

Mr. LAZZARINI.—Because private enterprise would not undertake the erection of a hostel that would not give an immediate return.

Mr. MATHEWS. — Half-a-dozen such establishments will be required.

Mr. LAZZARINI.—Quite so. The honorable member for Corio (Mr. Lister) objects to the building of the hostel by the Government in order that the convenience of honorable members may be served. Why does he not say that honorable members should be compelled to go to private restaurants for dinner every night instead of availing themselves of the parliamentary dining-rooms? Why does he not advocate the abolition of the conveniences that honorable members enjoy in this building? The hostel is to provide such conveniences as are available in every House of Parliament.

The honorable member for Kooyong stated that he was prepared to honour the compact made with New South Wales, but that the time was not yet ripe. When quite a boy, I read the debates in this House on the Federal Capital, and can well remember that even in those days the cry of those who opposed the establishment of the Capital was, "The time is not yet ripe. We will honour the compact, but at some future period." I am told that, under the Constitution, the Parliament should not have met in Melbourne after the site of the Federal Capital had been chosen. How long is it since Canberra was definitely fixed upon?



Mr. FENTON.—About thirteen years ago.

Mr. LAZZARINI.—And yet we have done practically nothing towards establishing the Parliament there. If we are to accept the judgment of the Minister for Works and Railways as to what amount of money should be spent every year on building the Federal Capital no one in this House to-day will live to see the Parliament meeting there. Ever since I have been in this House the policy which the Minister enunciated to-night has been that of those who are deady opposed to Canberra. The honorable member for Kooyong spoke of the Federal Capital as being “a sink of inconvenience and waste.” “Convenience” with him is the primary consideration. That, so far as he is concerned, is “where the shoe pinches.” It will inconvenience the honorable member to attend the sittings of the Parliament at Canberra just as it inconveniences representatives of other States to come to Melbourne. Representatives of New South Wales will not have their convenience served by the removal of the Parliament to Canberra; we shall either have to settle in the Capital or to maintain two homes, as we have to do at present. It is the question of inconvenience that troubles the honorable member for Kooyong and others who oppose this project. The honorable member said that a clique in Sydney was providing the motive power behind the Canberra movement. My reply is that the obstruction offered to the building of the Capital is the outcome of pure selfishness on the part of representatives of this State. It is time that this young country had its own Federal Capital. The removal of the Federal Parliament to Canberra will help to build up a fine national sentiment; it will be one of the things that will sweep away the parochial States-right interests which have been retarding the progress of Australia. It will give expression to a fine national spirit, and for these and other reasons I commend the motion to the House. In my opinion, even a delay of two years is too long; in any event the Federal Parliament should certainly be meeting at Canberra within that time.

Mr. FOLEY (Kalgoorlie) [6.5].—While appreciating the earnestness of

the advocacy of the honorable member for Eden-Monaro (Mr. Austin Chapman) and the honorable member for Dalley (Mr. Mahony), I can also give credit to the honorable member for Kooyong (Sir Robert Best); that honorable member has been equally consistent. The honorable member who has just resumed his seat asserted that the motion provides an acid test whereby the real views of every member upon the question of the transfer of this Parliament to Canberra will be revealed. I hold that if a vote is taken upon the motion it will not provide such a test. We are speaking rather early of sitting in Canberra when we place the date only two years ahead.

Mr. BLAKELEY.—That is not what you said at Menzies.

Mr. MAHONY.—What about the *Kalgoorlie Miner*?

Mr. FOLEY.—That journal does not exert the same “pull” upon me as the newspapers published in various of the capital cities do upon some other honorable members. There is, however, a great deal in the criticism that Melbourne is parochial upon almost all matters affecting Australia. At the same time, I am bound to admit that in almost every other part of Australia the same is said as being applicable to Sydney. During the recent Tariff debate, when the subject loomed so large all over Australia, the influence of Melbourne and Sydney was referred to with more or less bitterness almost everywhere outside of those cities. I desire to place this Legislature beyond the scope of any such influences. Australian politics should be free of the “pull” of any section of the press. Our political endeavours should be directed towards the benefit of all the people, and not of any one particular section. As for the project immediately under consideration, it is altogether premature. Has any honorable member yet seen the plans for the construction of the building in which we are to legislate at Canberra?

Mr. RILEY.—Yes.

Mr. FOLEY.—I have the word of the Minister for Works and Railways (Mr. Richard Foster) that those plans will not be ready for four months.

Mr. MAHONY.—We have seen the rough sketches.

Mr. FOLEY.—I would like to examine the plans of the chamber in which we are to sit from day to day. I shall not be prepared to support the construction of any parliamentary building in any part of Australia if it is not going to be an improvement on this place. No member should be called upon to address the House from a point where he cannot see the Speaker. It should not be necessary for any honorable member to have to turn his back upon almost all his fellow members in order to address the Chair. However, some honorable members who are ardent advocates of Canberra have had the exceptional privilege of examining the plans.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—They have seen rough sketches; the plans will be ready in about two months.

Mr. FOLEY.—When this Legislature meets at Canberra, on how many days a week shall we be sitting?

Mr. MATHEWS.—There will be a continuous Parliament.

Mr. FOLEY.—None of those points has yet been discussed.

Mr. MAHONY.—There is no need for a discussion of the details yet.

Mr. FOLEY.—I contend that they should all be threshed out before we go to Canberra. Is the same old business to continue? Here, nowadays, members representing remote parts of Australia are called upon to cool their heels from Friday to Wednesday, over each week-end, while other members can reach their homes in a tram or by journeying on a train for one night. At Canberra, Sydney members will be favoured by being able to board a train at 10 o'clock at night, arriving at their destination at about 5 o'clock in the morning. They will be actually "on a better wicket" than they are now. However, I give the Sydney representatives credit for believing that it is not for any such small personal reason that they desire to bring about the transfer of the Parliament. But I emphasize that the members representing the distant parts of the Commonwealth will be no better off than at present; indeed, numbers of them will not be as favorably situated. I am not touching upon the question whether or not we should go to Canberra. The matter of the establishment of the Federal Capital has been definitely settled; but it is impossible to state a hard-and-fast date on which this Parliament shall meet there.

Reference has been made, during the course of this debate, to the efforts of the American people to establish their own Federal Capital, and have their own Federal Parliament meet there. It is a historic fact that there was very considerable difference of opinion in the various States of the Union when the capital project was the chief subject of discussion.

Mr. MAHONY.—Of course, there were Robert Bests in those days.

Mr. FOLEY.—One big reason why we should not fix a definite date for the transfer is that the cost of building to-day is enormously greater than it was a few years ago, and far higher than it will be in a few years hence. By way of concrete example, I may say that I know of a house, the prime cost of which, when it was built before the war, was £547. That dwelling, if it were to be duplicated to-day, would entail an expenditure of £1,100. I do not favour the reduction of wages. My view is that before anything of that character is carried out to an appreciable extent, it should be preceded by a reduction in the cost of living; but honorable members use a poor argument when they say that we should push on with the work of building the Capital in order to afford more employment in the country. There is no justification for a policy of that sort. I shall vote against the motion. If we can get to Canberra quickly, let us do so; but on the data we have before us, it is impossible for this House to fix a definite time within which to transfer Parliament to Federal Territory.

Mr. MATHEWS (Melbourne Ports) [6.20].—I think the honorable member for Eden-Monaro (Mr. Austin Chapman) has made a mistake in proposing that Parliament should transfer to Canberra two years hence. It is impossible to prepare the Capital for the reception of Parliament in that time. Twenty-four years ago, when the proposals for Federation were being considered throughout the Commonwealth, the Conservatives of Melbourne went down on their knees to the people of New South Wales and said, "Give us Federation, and you can have anything you want." That offer did not draw the people of New South Wales; they stipulated hard-and-fast conditions, and continued coy for some time. Then the Melbourne Conservatives grovelled on their stomachs and said, "We will



give you the Federal Capital, or anything you like, so long as you agree to Federation." To-day we have that same class trying to repudiate the condition upon which they induced the people of New South Wales to enter Federation. It is amusing to hear some honorable members talk in opposition to this proposal. In my opinion, it would be a good thing for us to remove to Canberra. Of course, some of those honorable members who oppose the transfer will not go there; they will not be able to afford to go, because they will not be able to sit in Parliament and still make large fortunes at their professions or in business. When Victoria joined Federation it was known that the Federal Capital was to be established in New South Wales, and at the inception of Federation it was thought that this Parliament would be sitting at Canberra within a very few years. Of course, the war gave the project a setback, and I believe that but for that we would have been in Canberra to-day. But the vested interests in Victoria are pulling the strings so strongly that the representatives of that State will not vote for the transfer. The articles published in the Melbourne press are enough to make one sick. Those journals are so bound up with the property interests in Melbourne that they do not want the Federal Administration removed from here. But it will be a good thing for Australia when the Capital is taken away from Melbourne, because Parliament will then be able to legislate untrammelled by parochial influences. Some people object that further expenditure there will be a waste; but it is clear to me that we shall waste the money already expended if we do not complete the scheme at the earliest possible date. That point is so obvious as not to require labouring. No man, inside or outside this House, can prove that Canberra, as a going concern, will not pay its way. Even to-day, although money has not yet been spent there in a way that creates a popular interest in the place, the fees from the land represent fair interest on the money invested. That being so, what will happen when Canberra becomes a living city? We know how land prices rise when a railway runs through a district, and a few blocks on either side are reserved for a township; and it is certain that,

within a few years, the rents from land in Canberra will more than pay for the cost of administration of the Territory, to say nothing of the public buildings in the Capital. Only the deliberately blind cannot see that. When we get away from Melbourne we shall get better legislation. One, reading the *Age*, would think that the people who conduct it own Australia. They have no sense of fairness; they never tell the truth, even by mistake. Their portrayal of the doings in this Parliament is the very opposite of the truth. The *Argus* is not much better; but it has a different view-point. The people who conduct the *Age* seek to dominate politics in Australia. I have never denied that their literary capacity is great, but their political capacity is nil. Like every other man who is not in Parliament, these writers think that if they had charge of public affairs they could play hell and break things. There has never been in any Australian Parliament a newspaper man who was successful to any extent as a legislator. Some honorable members may think that the late Alfred Deakin was an exception, but he was really not a pressman. When these men get an opportunity in political life they prove ineffective, but they sit in their newspaper offices and criticise and condemn Parliament in every possible way. Their outpourings would not matter if they stated the case fairly. I have often laughed at the newspaper attacks upon the Government. They pass by actions or inaction which would constitute good ground for castigating the Government, and attack them in regard to matters that are comparatively unimportant. Some people urge that, rather than spend money in creating a city at Canberra, we should honour the compact with New South Wales by simply transferring the capital to Sydney. There would be no advantage in doing that. Selfish interests in Sydney are as bad as those in Melbourne, and we should be simply exchanging one evil for another. The place for Parliament to meet is the place which was agreed upon years ago; but, after hearing the speech of the Minister for Works and Railways (Mr. Richard Foster) to-day, I am not quite certain that the Ministry are sincere in their professed desire to proceed with the construction of the Federal Capital.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—Why?

Mr. MATHEWS.—They are not dealing with the project in a way which would prove their sincerity. They talk about the price of material and labour. Does any honorable member believe that prices will ever come down to the pre-war level?

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—No. I wish they would drop half way.

Mr. MATHEWS.—I ask leave to continue my remarks on another occasion.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

*Sitting suspended from 6.28 to 8 p.m.*

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT.

### SUGAR: COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT CONTROL—BALANCE-SHEET.

Debate resumed from 2nd August (*vide* page 1041), on motion by Mr. RODGERS—

That the paper—"Commonwealth Government Sugar Control, Balance-sheet, as at 30th June, 1922; profit and loss account for the period from 19th July, 1915, to 30th June, 1922; trading and profit and loss account for the period from 19th July, 1915, to 30th June, 1922; operating and trading accounts"—be printed.

Upon which Mr. CHARLTON had moved by way of amendment—

That the following words be added to the motion:—

"and the retail price of sugar be reduced to 4½d. per lb. from the 7th August, 1922."

Mr. PRATTEN (Parramatta) [8.0].—The printing of a paper appears to be a small matter, but upon it, in this case, hinges the whole question of the control of sugar, the future of the sugar industry, and the fate of the amendment submitted by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Charlton) that the price of sugar be reduced immediately to 4½d. per lb. It would be extremely beneficial to Australia at large if we had a full, frank, and free discussion upon this highly important matter of production within our own borders; and, if in my endeavour to place before the House a complete review of the whole position as I see it, I may exceed my allotted time, I hope that I shall have the indulgence of honorable members. I realize that the Minister for Trade and Customs (Mr. Rodgers) has only been in his present office for six months; but he, in his position as controller of sugar, is practically like a director who is engaged upon the thankless task of clearing up one of the

phases of the world's deflation of prices. He has been bombarded from all sides. However, I desire to enter upon the discussion of this question as one who has had a very long experience of sugar. I have been through the sugar districts of Queensland, I represent in my position in this House at least 100,000 consumers of sugar, and I have been cognisant of many of the troubles of fruit-growers for quite a long time past. From each and every angle I shall endeavour to approach the question in as fair a spirit as possible.

Although it is not necessary for the immediate discussion of to-day to refer back very far in the history of the sugar industry of the Commonwealth, I venture to say that a review of the position of production, prices, and so forth since the inception of Federation will serve the useful purpose of establishing some standards of comparison, and of throwing a little light upon this much-discussed subject. We are not helped very much by the Minister's statement as to what is to be the future of the industry, whether an agreement should be continued in some shape or form, or whether the people engaged in the sugar industry should be protected, or, like others engaged in primary industries, so encouraged in self-help as to ultimately lead to co-operation and control among themselves. Whatever may be the merits of nationalization or private enterprise, co-operation, or Government control, we must always remember, in discussing the present sugar position, that it is the result of a deliberate step taken by Parliament itself in confirming the agreement entered into about March, 1920. In this House, every honorable member stands in the position of director, so far as the politics of the Commonwealth, and all that surround them, are concerned; while the Government stand in the position of managing directors in respect to every matter that may arise in connexion with parliamentary government and its concomitants. To-day, when the sugar operations of our managing directors are under review, every honorable member has a right to know fully how the financial and commercial activities, as well as the political problems of administration, have been carried on. In my position, as one of the directors of the Commonwealth, I am well within my rights when I say that to me



the sugar account presented by the Minister was much too lean. At all events, it had not much fat upon it, and as a business statement did not fairly cover the sugar operations of the Government.

Mr. MAXWELL.—The Minister did not suggest that it did.

Mr. PRATTEN.—The Minister, in his statement last week, grouped all figures of sugar control over a period of seven years. In my opinion, if it was not intended to be extended, it gave a minimum of information with a maximum of complexity, and by no means gave any help to those in the House who want to find a fair balance as between the producers and consumers of sugar in the Commonwealth. No business man could describe the statement as being other than merely a bird's eye view of the position. It did not bring us to close quarters with the industry, and was useless as a document upon which to base intelligent commendation, criticism, or conclusions. In my opinion Parliament is entitled to at least detailed balance-sheets, if not for each season, at any rate for the periods of each of the three controls exercised by the Government during the seven years. During that time we have had all sorts of fluctuating conditions, sometimes making profits and sometimes suffering losses—and heavy losses at that. In the statement issued, the broad based periods have been ignored and run into one another, although during the last seven years there have been three changes in prices for the grower, miller, refiner, distributors, and users.

In fairness to the Minister for Trade and Customs, I must say that it has given me great pleasure to hear his promise that he will give Parliament complete and full details regarding the sugar business of the Commonwealth during every year and every period.

There is one matter in connexion with the sugar statement which should be elucidated, seeing that it has a bearing upon the amendment submitted by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Charlton), and upon what the real position will be on 1st November next, when we expect to have a reduction in price. I refer to the item of stocks of sugar on hand. In the balance-sheet presented, stocks on hand at cost price are estimated to be worth £1,970,000. So far as I can ascertain, and assuming that the raw sugar in the

hands of refineries cost approximately £33 per ton, the figures given in the balance-sheet submitted by the Minister would indicate that there is now about 60,000 tons of sugar on hand. If that is the case, and if there is nothing else to take into consideration, the debit to profit and loss account of £255,000 should be wiped off in two months, so that on the Minister's own statement a reduction of 1d. per lb. in sugar should take place on 1st September next instead of 1st November. But there are other considerations to be taken into account besides the deficit shown by the Minister. When a reduction is announced, I believe that the Government will be inundated by applications from all holders of sugar for rebates on the stocks they hold. It is perfectly natural that those who deal in sugar or use sugar will buy from hand to mouth between now and 1st November, so that as a consequence in the next few months the average sales cannot be expected to be as high as they are in normal times.

Mr. RODGERS.—The object of giving ample notice is to enable stocks and purchases to be adjusted with a greater degree of accuracy.

Mr. PRATTEN.—I agree with the Minister; but I believe the features I have indicated have already been taken into consideration. We may estimate the normal consumption or sales of sugar at so many thousand tons per week, but I believe that during the next few months the sales will be below the average, and in the circumstances it would only be fair to give the manufacturers who have a lot of sugar stacked in their factories and included in the goods they sell in their industries some reasonable rebate in connexion with the proposed reduction.

I would also suggest that there may be debits against the sugar control not yet disclosed. There is bound to be a considerable amount of interest, because we see interest for sugar being paid even into the Treasurer's account on account of the forthcoming Budget. It is a comparatively small amount, but is, I think, paid by the sugar control for the use of Commonwealth moneys lying here and in London that are practically at call in the Commonwealth Bank, and are not, for the time being, in use.

Mr. BRUCE.—That is right; there is no money under interest.

Mr. PRATTEN.—In order to clarify the point, I repeat that the amounts that have been received under the heading of sugar that were shown in the Treasurer's statement the other day, are received from the sugar account as interest on money being used for the purpose of financing the sugar control.

Mr. BRUCE.—That is right; it is our money instead of borrowing from the Bank.

Mr. PRATTEN.—I point out to the Minister that the auditor's statement is unusual, and in spite of the Minister's stress on this point, the wording of the first paragraph seems to imply that the Auditor-General had not had proper time to go into the matter, and that there were amendments made in the account originally submitted to him and those now in our hands. The Minister courageously told the House that, amongst other things to the credit of the Government in connexion with the sugar control, was that all the purchases of sugar were made free of cost of commission to the Government, and were done by their advisers practically free of charge. It is difficult to believe that so much philanthropy exists; and the statement can be checked only by a detailed account showing dates, prices, names of buyers and sellers, in connexion with the indents for sugar placed abroad.

Another statement made was that refining has been done at cost price. This also is difficult to believe, in view of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company's balance-sheets of recent years. I agree with the Minister that the sugar control will be judged by the final results, and I leave the matter at that. But I want to say that he has taken a good deal of the edge off some criticism I have made in promising, at various times since the statement was laid on the table, to take the House fully and frankly into his confidence in regard to the whole of the transactions of the sugar control. I wish to take one more exception to a statement made by the Minister, namely, that the rest of the world—if by this he means Europe—was at one time in the war on rations, while Australia was fully supplied. That statement is true; but it should also be stated that the submarine menace, and the necessity also for revenue, vitally affected the price of sugar in the northern hemisphere. The

shortage of shipping also affected the position, and at one time England had but a few days' supply of foodstuffs; and after the submarine menace had become acute, she dared not do anything but keep her people on the ration list for many other commodities besides sugar. In Australia our Java shipping service was never entirely interrupted. We had also our Commonwealth Line trading mostly in the southern hemisphere; and no fair comparison, and certainly no arguments, can be used regarding the relative position of commodities in Australia and in England, once the submarine menace in the northern hemisphere became acute.

Mr. GREENE.—The honorable member has said that this position was due to the submarine menace, but the real critical time for the sugar business was long after the war was over.

Mr. PRATTEN.—But the Minister has been talking about the price of sugar in England during the war.

Mr. RODGERS.—There were seven years of control.

Mr. PRATTEN.—I was pointing out that both the Minister and the sugar propagandists from Queensland based a good many arguments on the highest price paid in England during the war.

Mr. RODGERS.—I am not a propagandist.

Mr. PRATTEN.—The Minister has said that the grocers were satisfied, and I am not surprised that they should be, because they were getting a much bigger profit out of retailing sugar than they ever did; and, I am not sure, but I think they have been prevented by law from selling it cheaper than 6d. per lb. There is one big emporium in Sydney which is now selling sugar at 5½d. retail, and I hope a great many other grocers will follow suit under the present arrangement. In my opinion, without Government control of the distribution of sugar, competition amongst the distributors themselves, under the present agreement, would have brought down the price to 5½d. per lb. One other remark by the Minister I shall refer to later on, and that is that the great increase in the export of commodities containing sugar was because we had the cheapest sugar in the world. In this connexion, I draw the attention of honorable members to the following table, showing the production of sugar in the Commonwealth,



according to the *Sugar Journal*, since Federation has been in existence:—

|      |     |     | Tons.   |
|------|-----|-----|---------|
| 1902 | ... | ... | 98,795  |
| 1903 | ... | ... | 111,650 |
| 1904 | ... | ... | 164,670 |
| 1905 | ... | ... | 172,242 |
| 1906 | ... | ... | 205,573 |
| 1907 | ... | ... | 214,244 |
| 1908 | ... | ... | 165,715 |
| 1909 | ... | ... | 146,470 |
| 1910 | ... | ... | 229,584 |
| 1911 | ... | ... | 190,595 |
| 1912 | ... | ... | 129,783 |
| 1913 | ... | ... | 266,267 |
| 1914 | ... | ... | 246,408 |
| 1915 | ... | ... | 159,681 |
| 1916 | ... | ... | 192,831 |
| 1917 | ... | ... | 324,260 |
| 1918 | ... | ... | 209,853 |
| 1919 | ... | ... | 162,298 |
| 1920 | ... | ... | 167,401 |
| 1921 | ... | ... | 281,433 |

Queensland produces over 90 per cent. of the sugar production in Australia, and it will be seen from these figures that the average yearly outputs of sugar have steadily increased. From 1903 to 1914 it had on the average doubled, the average being for this period nearly 200,000 tons. From 1915 to 1919 there was a further increase, and in 1920 and 1921 the

average yearly production was 224,000 tons. The consumption point of about 275,000 tons is the maximum point of the increase of the sugar industry to-day, unless we get more population to consume it within our own borders. Those honorable gentlemen who have long been members of this Parliament will remember the many keen debates, and the great consideration that was given to this industry in connexion with the abolition of black labour. It will be seen by the figures I have quoted that the production of sugar in Australia has shown considerable progress. The bounty and the Excise came to an end in 1913, the duty of £6 per ton being in full operation in the year 1914; and I think that it will be generally admitted that, in spite of the industry suffering at various times from the effect of drought, cold, or other physical causes, the figures on the whole show a satisfactory increase in production. The following table, which I think will be found to be approximately correct, sets out a comparison of the various amounts received and paid in connexion with all those concerned in the production and consumption of sugar—

TABLE A.

| Wages.                                                 | Approximate<br>Wages paid<br>per day. | Grower for<br>Cane per<br>ton raw<br>sugar. | Millers<br>per ton of<br>raw sugar. | Total<br>per ton of<br>mill sugar. | For freight,<br>insurance,<br>bagging,<br>refining,<br>handling, &c.<br>About. | Average<br>net wholesale<br>price<br>refined sugar<br>in bags. | Merchants'<br>and<br>grocers'<br>profits<br>per lb. | Retail<br>price to<br>public<br>per lb. |
|--------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
|                                                        |                                       | £ s. d.                                     | £ s. d.                             | £ s. d.                            | £ s. d.                                                                        | £ s. d.                                                        |                                                     |                                         |
| 1908-13.<br>Excise and<br>Bounty<br>abolished<br>1914. | 8s.                                   | 8 0 0                                       | 4 10 0                              | 12 10 0                            | 6 10 0                                                                         | 19 0 0                                                         | ½d.                                                 | 2½d. to<br>2¾d.                         |
| Duty £6<br>a ton ..                                    | 9s. 4d. to<br>10s. 4d.                | 10 0 0                                      | 4 15 0                              | 14 15 0                            | 5 5 0                                                                          | 20 0 0                                                         | ½d.                                                 | 2½d. to<br>2¾d.                         |
| June—<br>1915-16                                       | 9s. 4d. to<br>10s. 4d.                | 12 10 0                                     | 5 10 0                              | 18 0 0                             | 6 10 0                                                                         | 24 10 0                                                        | ¾d.                                                 | 3d.                                     |
| July—<br>1916-17                                       | 11s. to 12s.                          | 12 10 0                                     | 5 10 0                              | 18 0 0                             | 6 10 0                                                                         | 27 10 0*                                                       | ¾d.                                                 | 3d.                                     |
| 1917-18                                                | 12s. 6d. to<br>13s.                   | 13 10 0<br>to<br>14 0 0                     | 7 0 0<br>to<br>7 10 0               | 21 0 0                             | 6 10 0                                                                         | 27 10 0                                                        | ¾d.                                                 | 3½d.                                    |
| 1918-19                                                | 12s. 6d. to<br>13s.                   | 13 10 0<br>to<br>14 0 0                     | 7 0 0<br>to<br>7 10 0               | 21 0 0                             | 6 10 0                                                                         | 27 10 0                                                        | ½d.                                                 | 3½d.                                    |
| 1919-20                                                | 12s. 6d. to<br>13s. 8d.               | 13 10 0<br>to<br>14 0 0                     | 7 0 0<br>to<br>7 10 0               | 21 0 0                             | 6 10 0                                                                         | 27 10 0                                                        | ½d.                                                 | 3½d.                                    |
| March—<br>1920-21                                      | 15s. 4d. to<br>17s. 8d.               | 19 6 8                                      | 11 0 0                              | 30 6 8                             | 6 16 6                                                                         | 47 0 0†                                                        | 1d.                                                 | 6d.                                     |
| 1921-22                                                | 15s. 4d. to<br>17s. 8d.               | 19 6 8                                      | 11 0 0                              | 30 6 8                             | 6 16 6                                                                         | 47 0 0†                                                        | 1d.                                                 | 6d.                                     |

\* Government made a profit on this.

† Government profit about £9 a ton.

Mr. WATT.—Are they the official figures?

Mr. PRATTEN.—No, but the House may rely on them as approximately correct. It will be seen from this table that if no losses on importations had been made, and there had been what I think to be a reasonable distribution cost fixed, the sugar would have been selling retail at 4½d. per lb. during the whole course of the present agreement, and the obloquy that the sugar industry of Queensland has had to bear through being loaded up by at least 1½d. per lb., might have been avoided, and much prejudice on the part of consumers in the south saved. That is to say, if the grocer had not been given 1d. per lb. when they received before only ½d.—

Mr. CHARLTON.—He gets nine-tenths of a penny.

Mr. PRATTEN.—And the wholesaler gets the rest.

Mr. CHARLTON.—And also a rebate of 5 per cent. more than in any other part of the world.

Mr. PRATTEN.—It must be remembered that the consumption of sugar within the Commonwealth, direct and indirect, averages about 2 lbs. per head per unit of population per week, and each 1d. per lb. on the price of sugar, up or down, means an average difference of 1s. per week for every family of six. This fact cannot be overlooked in our consideration of the sugar problem.

The imports of sugar and the average price per ton, according to Customs statistics in recent years, were as follows:—

TABLE B.  
TONS.

| —                 | 1914-15. | 1915-16. | 1916-17. | 1917-18. | 1918-19. | 1919-20. | 1920-21. |
|-------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Fiji .. ..        | 5,045    | 23,031   | 45,443   | 15,405   | 2,539    | 7,487    | 1,792    |
| Mauritius ..      | 655      | 667      | ..       | 380      | 6,866    | 4        | 2        |
| Netherlands, E.I. | 7,407    | 43,151   | 24,239   | 4        | 43,159   | 99,091   | 81,726   |
| Cuba .. ..        | ..       | ..       | ..       | ..       | ..       | 6,206    | 26,517   |
| Other .. ..       | 18       | 49,262   | 11,479   | 16       | 5        | 17       | 6,237    |
|                   | 13,125   | 116,111  | 81,161   | 15,805   | 52,569   | 112,805  | 116,274  |

Average prices per ton were as follow:—

| —                                                                             | 1914-15. | 1915-16. | 1916-17. | 1917-18. | 1918-19. | 1919-20. | 1920-21. |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
|                                                                               | £ s. d.  | £ s. d.  | £ s. d.  | £ s. d.  | £ s. d.  | £ s. d.  | £ s. d.  |
| Fiji .. ..                                                                    | 14 14 1  | 18 9 11  | 18 5 7   | 17 12 1  | 18 17 0  | 21 8 10  | 44 4 5   |
| Mauritius ..                                                                  | 13 13 4  | 21 14 1  | ..       | 19 2 8   | 21 3 0   | 40 0 0   | 59 0 0   |
| Netherlands, E.I.                                                             | 13 3 3   | 14 3 9   | 22 2 7   | 27 5 0   | 19 18 0  | 40 12 1  | 55 4 7   |
| Cuba .. ..                                                                    | ..       | ..       | ..       | ..       | ..       | 28 1 0   | 62 5 5   |
| Other .. ..                                                                   | 20 17 9  | 16 11 9  | 23 14 0  | 25 10 0  | 33 12 0  | 58 1 2   | 50 18 5  |
| Total average price<br>—all countries<br>C.I.F. and E. re-<br>fining ports .. | 13 15 0  | 16 2 1   | 20 3 11  | 17 13 0  | 20 0 3   | 38 12 10 | 56 8 5   |

This is a table of imports of sugar since 1914-15, and includes the whole period of Commonwealth control. It tabulates separately the quantity imported from Fiji, Mauritius, Java, and Cuba. I obtained this information from the Statistical Bureau, and have dissected it in order to arrive at the figures I show. I have taken the import value of the sugar to be, without duty, but to in-

clude c.i.f. and e., refining ports, and I thus arrive at the following average prices of imported sugar, without duty at refining ports in Australia:—£13 15s. in 1914-15; £16 2s. 1d. in 1915-16; £20 3s. 11d. in 1916-17; £17 13s. in 1917-18; £20 0s. 3d. in 1918-19; £38 12s. 10d. in 1919-20; and £56 8s. 5d. in 1920-21.



Mr. WATT.—Are those figures based on the declared prices for import duty purposes?

Mr. PRATTEN.—The import duty is a specific one.

Mr. WATT.—Yes; but are they the declared invoice prices?

Mr. PRATTEN.—They are the values given by the Department of Trade and Customs for the sugar imported, and the Statistical Bureau buttresses them by giving me the information that the figures show the value at ports of entry without duty. The small quantity of sugar we re-exported for the period named has not been taken into consideration, but does not materially affect the figures and values of imports I have given. The apex of our export trade for jams, canned fruits, and condensed milk was in the year 1918-19.

I think that a perusal of the import figures I have given in table "B," which I am informed includes c.i.f. and e. costs, Sydney, shows that the price of sugar did not so much affect the enormous increase in the export of commodities containing sugar as did the war, and its large military requirements, and the dislocation of the world's trade.

Mr. GREENE.—Is the honorable gentleman including—

Mr. PRATTEN.—In reply to the honorable member for Balaclava (Mr. Watt), I must take it that the values put upon imports by the Customs authorities are values at the ports of entry, otherwise the Statistician's figures are all wrong. I have dissected these figures, and, on the information I have, I think they are correct. If the Minister in charge of the sugar control (Mr. Rodgers) is able to show that I am wrong because I have not taken this, that, or the other thing into consideration, I can only say that further information than I have given is not available to me as a member of Parliament.

I think the Government treated the manufacturers very fairly during the earlier periods of sugar control, but I do not agree with the Minister, on the figures I have quoted, that the enormous figures for export, during the apex year of 1918-19, for jams, canned fruits, and condensed milk, were entirely the result of the sugar control. If my figures are correct, it is an illusion to think that, at any time during the war, sugar was selling in Australia for less than the price at which sugar from Java and Fiji could

have been imported. The figures I have given prove that that is so. It will be seen by reference to table "A" that, from the commencement of Government control, the minimum net price for direct distribution on a cash basis, without any distributing profit, averaged about £20 per ton. That was before the sugar control. On the 9th July, 1915, the Government took control, and raised the net price to about £24 per ton. On the 17th January, 1916, it was further raised to about £27 10s. per ton, and remained at that price until 26th March, 1920—the commencement of the present agreement, when the lowest net cash price, on the average, to manufacturers and wholesale distributors was about £47 per ton. The Minister will mark the difference between the home net cash price and the wholesale cash price, subject to discount.

Mr. RODGERS.—There is also the question of whether the sugar is for home consumption or for manufacturing purposes for export.

Mr. PRATTEN.—I am perfectly well aware that a rebate of £20 per ton is allowed in respect of sugar used for manufacturing purposes for export.

Mr. RODGERS.—And that disposes of the honorable member's argument.

Mr. PRATTEN.—Not at all. I wish now to raise another point in connexion with the asset of £415,000 alleged to be due by the Commonwealth Government to the sugar control as set out in the Minister's statement.

Mr. RODGERS.—I made no such allegation.

Mr. PRATTEN.—In the statement presented by the Minister there is, in the assets of the sugar control, an item, "Payment to Treasury — profits £415,000." So far as I can trace it, that item has arisen in this way: When the late Lord Forrest was Treasurer his Budget for the year ended 30th June, 1917, showed an amount of £431,690 0s. 2d. as having been paid into the Consolidated Revenue on sugar account. I understand this to be a sum of £415,000, representing profit made by the sugar control prior to that date, plus an amount of interest making up the full sum. The Minister now brings it back as an asset in his accounts, and it is undoubtedly an asset. Although this was a profit made long ago, it was, nevertheless, a profit made out of sugar control up to that

date, and I am afraid my honorable friend, the Treasurer (Mr. Bruce), will have to repay the amount before the sugar accounts are closed up. In any case I, for one, will not stand for the Consolidated Revenue of the Commonwealth benefiting to the extent of £415,000 out of sugar, and so taxing the same thing twice in respect of the whole control.

Mr. RILEY.—But how will the honorable member vote?

Mr. PRATTEN.—It will make no difference so far as my vote is concerned, because the Minister for Trade and Customs has taken the amount into consideration as an asset. It is simply a matter as between him and the Treasurer. I think the Minister is entitled to take it into consideration as an asset, and that the amount will have to be found for the sugar control in the forthcoming Budget.

Mr. RODGERS.—It is a positive obligation on the part of the sugar control to take it into account as an asset.

Mr. PRATTEN.—If that is so, it is a debt owing by the Consolidated Revenue to the sugar control. I have come to the conclusion, on the figures I have given, with regard to the importations of sugar into the Commonwealth over the whole period of control, that Australian producers have not been paid less than the world's parity at Australian ports of entry. They, in fact, have been paid a little more, but, in my opinion, not enough to make up the disparity between increased wages costs and those for black labour in other sugar producing countries, and not enough to give the Australian sugar producers a fair difference in favour of white labour.

About the middle of 1919 the world's parity for the first time since the war began exceeded that in Australia, and as the year ran on the discrepancy became greater. Naturally the sugar-growers became dissatisfied, and the result was that the present agreement was made in March, 1920, for three years. That agreement was made, as far as I can ascertain, because of the high parity of the then world's prices. It was, when made, a good agreement for the consumers of sugar in Australia, and the sugar producers then did not get the world's parity, as will be seen by a comparison of tables "A" and "B" for the years 1919-20 and 1920-21.

It seems to me that up to 30th June, 1919, there should have been no loss on sugar, local or imported, if imported free of duty, and the old credit of £415,000

or £431,000 odd should have been intact. It will be seen in table "B" that the sugar control then was not losing money so far as imported sugar was concerned, the import figures for the first four years of control averaging a cost of less than £20 per ton without duty at refinery centres. I am in the dark as to whether Customs duty was charged during the first four years of control or not. The cost of refining only is not large, so that until world's prices in the middle of the year 1919 began to soar, on the evidence, the credit, in the Treasury, to the operations of the sugar control previously, was probably intact, or at least should not have been drawn on, especially as the period 1918-19 would close on 30th June, 1919.

Having given my reasons why up to 30th June, 1919, there should have been no loss on sugar, and the old credit should have been intact, I come to the average cost of importations in 1919-20, viz., £38 12s. 10d. per ton, and the net tonnage imported, 110,000 tons. The refined cost to the Government, without duty, and including management, would be about, say, £44 per ton. For the first nine months of that period sugar was selling wholesale at £27 10s. per ton net. There would be a loss, therefore, of approximately £16 10s. per ton. On the portion of the 110,000 tons imported in that year and sold at £27 10s. per ton up to March—the date of the new agreement, when the price was raised to £47—if we estimate that portion at three-fourths of the total quantity of 110,000 tons and accept the loss as amounting to £16 10s. per ton, we arrive at this conclusion: 82,500 tons was sold at a loss of £16 10s. per ton; and that transaction is equivalent to placing £1,361,250 to the debit side of the Sugar Account when the agreement began, less a sum of about £400,000 which must be set to the credit side. The profit on the remaining quarter of the 110,000 tons—assuming it to have cost £44 per ton, and that there was no duty—would be £3 per ton.

Now, in 1920-21, the average cost was, say, about £60 per ton refined, showing a net loss of about £13 per ton. The quantity imported during this period was 116,000 tons; and this, of course, would be a further debit to the Sugar Account. But, on all the Australian-produced sugar sold since 23rd March, 1920, the Government's profit has been, so far as figures show, about £9 per ton. My



calculations, in the absence of more detailed particulars, are that the price of sugar could be reduced at once, and not so far off as 1st November. I present the following table "C," setting out the estimated position of the Sugar Account from 1st July, 1919, to 1st July, 1922:—

TABLE C.

*Losses.*

|                                                        |            |
|--------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 1st July, 1919, to March, 1920—                        |            |
| 82,500 tons at £16 10s. imported, no duty .. .. .      | £1,361,250 |
| 1st July, 1920, to 1st July, 1921—                     |            |
| 116,000 tons at £13 imported, no duty 1,508,000        |            |
| 1st July, 1921, to 1st July, 1922—                     |            |
| No loss on imported sugar.                             |            |
| Rebates, &c., less miscellaneous profits, say, .. .. . | 75,000     |
| Interest, say .. .. .                                  | 250,000    |
| Credit Balance .. .. .                                 | 723,250    |
|                                                        | <hr/>      |
|                                                        | £3,917,500 |

*Profits.*

|                                                             |            |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 1st July, 1919—                                             |            |
| Amount to Credit .. .. .                                    | £415,000   |
| March to 1st July, 1920—                                    |            |
| Profit on 27,500 tons imported at £3..                      | 82,500     |
| March, 1920, to March, 1921—                                |            |
| Profit on Australian Sugar, 180,000 tons, at £9 .. .. .     | 1,620,000  |
| March, 1921, to 1st July, 1922—                             |            |
| Profit on Australian Sugar, say, 200,000 tons at £9 .. .. . | 1,800,000  |
|                                                             | <hr/>      |
|                                                             | £3,917,500 |

NOTE.—This table shows Credit Balance of £723,250, as compared with a Deficit of £255,000 as per Official Statement at same date.

Table does not allow for any Customs duty being paid on any imported sugar during the whole period of control, and any duty paid will diminish the estimated credit accordingly.

As the note attached to table C shows, my calculations are based on the assumption that no duty has been paid upon any sugar during any portion of the period of control. But I now understand, from an interjection of the Minister, that duty was paid up to 1919. Obviously, that fact materially alters the figures which I have just given. Calculating the duty up to that period, roughly, at the rate of £6 per ton, that—so far as I can rapidly check the figures—would make the Minister's statement correct, namely, that there was a deficit of £255,000 in the sugar account.

No honorable member can go into further details unless he be supplied with the full accounts of the Department for the three different periods of varying prices. The losses on imported sugar, owing to high world's parity before and after the present agreement, are the real cause of consumers having to pay 6d. instead of

5d. per lb. But the peak of prices reached during the agitation amongst the sugar-growers for the world's parity did not last more than six months after the agreement had been made.

I now approach the consideration of the present sugar control, and of the statements that have been made concerning it. I will admit at once that able propaganda work has been done by the sugar industry in connexion with the present agreement. At its inception, the Prime Minister and Parliament—and I take my full share in the responsibility—did, owing to the sudden and extraordinary increases in the world's parity for sugar, about the middle of 1919, enter into an agreement which, in effect, doubled the price of sugar over the average of pre-war rates. When the agreement was being considered, it was claimed that one of the reasons why Parliament should enter into it was the fact that the Australian sugar industry had been robbed of the world's parity during the course of the war. The figures which I have given do not prove it. But that which can be proved is that, at the time when the agitation for the present agreement began, the world's parity had jumped to an extraordinary extent, and it had been at abnormal figures for about nine months prior to the present sugar agreement being entered into. The fact is that, instead of the world's parity being abnormal during the course of the war, it was practically normal from 1914-15 to 1918-19; the jump took place about the middle of 1919. The most, therefore, that the sugar industry can claim is that for nine months—namely from 1st July, 1919 to the date on which the agreement was entered into in March, 1920—the world's parity for sugar was higher than the local wholesale price, but that for more than three years previously the local wholesale price had been considerably more than the world's parity; while, for years previous to that it was higher to the extent of the duty imposed by Parliament, which was £6 per ton. Therefore, any claim that the Queensland sugar industry had on the Commonwealth to bring the price on a level with the world's parity, and any benefit that Australian sugar consumers had through Government control, must now be confined to a period of about nine months prior to the present agreement, and for a period of five or six months after it.

When discussing the present sugar agreement in another place, I hazarded

the opinion, which has since been borne out, that the agreement extended for a year too long; that, in the first year, it would be in favour of the consumer; that, for the second year, it was very doubtful that the then high world's parity would prevail; while, for the third year, the agreement would be most unfavorable to the sugar users and consumers of Australia. At that time, those who supported the agreement ventured the opinion that, in the interests of the growers, the agreement was for a year too long. They said it would be against the interests of the growers to enter into an agreement for more than two years, in view of the certainty of a shortage in sugar throughout the world. The sequel to-day is that, in Australia, the price of sugar to the consumer is 6d. per lb., and the minimum wholesale net price to the manufacturer is £47 per ton. In America, the price for home consumption is 6 cents, or 3d., per lb.; and for export, 4 cents, or 2d., per lb. The price at which Java mill white sugar can be bought, c.i.f. and e. Australia, is about £20 per ton.

Perhaps, for the sake of clarity, it would be as well for me to quote the Customs duty on sugar imposed in various countries. I give the following, on the authority of the *Sugar Journal*:—

United Kingdom, general, £25 13s. 4d.; British preferential, £21 7s. 9d. (98 per cent. polarization). Canada, general, £11 3s.; British preferential, £8 7s. United States, general, £9 19s. 8d. South Africa, general, £6 14s. 5d. Australia, general, £6.

When statements are made that, in the United Kingdom, the price of sugar is

£48 10s. per ton, it should be pointed out that the duty alone is £25 13s. 4d.; and that, when comparisons are made between the price of Australian sugar and prices in other countries, the Customs duties imposed by those various countries should be given. The retail price for the United Kingdom has been quoted at 5½d. per lb., but, out of this, it will be seen that nearly 3d. per lb. is for duty. All the information I can get practically concurs in proving that the high world's parity did not exist for much more than about eighteen months—that is, for nine months before and a few months after this agreement was made; and I hope that my contribution to the debate will have the effect of preventing further misstatements being made with regard to what consumers owe the sugar industry. Many loose statements have been made, largely by the special propagandists of the sugar industry, which have no basis in fact. It has been stated that the present agreement is advantageous to the sugar users in Australia. It has been asserted that, but for the fact of the existence of the sugar agreement, extraordinary prices would have been paid; and, further, that sugar control in Australia has saved Australian sugar consumers extraordinary sums, varying from £20,000,000 to £30,000,000, covering the period of control. I now present table D, which makes a relative comparison of the cost of Australian mill white sugar at home ports, and of foreign raw sugar at refining ports of entry:—

TABLE D.

| Year.           | Australian Production. | Price paid to Canegrower and Miller. | Cost of Imports c.i.f. and e. | Total amount paid for the Australian Crop. | Value of the Australian Crop on basis of Cost of Foreign Sugar. |
|-----------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
|                 | Tons.                  | £ s. d.                              | £ s. d.                       | £                                          | £                                                               |
| 1915-16 .. ..   | 159,640                | 18 0 0                               | 16 0 0                        | 2,873,520                                  | 2,554,240                                                       |
| 1916-17 .. ..   | 193,036                | 18 0 0                               | 20 0 0                        | 3,474,648                                  | 3,860,720                                                       |
| 1917-18 .. ..   | 327,589                | 21 0 0                               | 17 10 0                       | 6,879,369                                  | 5,732,807                                                       |
| 1918-19 .. ..   | 202,256                | 21 0 0                               | 20 0 0                        | 4,247,376                                  | 4,045,120                                                       |
| 1919-20 .. ..   | 172,973                | 21 0 0                               | 38 10 0                       | 3,632,433                                  | 6,659,460                                                       |
| 1920-21 .. ..   | 180,000                | 30 6 8                               | 56 0 0                        | 5,460,000                                  | 10,080,000                                                      |
| 1921-22 .. ..   | 250,000                | 30 6 8                               | 22 0 0                        | 7,583,333                                  | 5,500,000                                                       |
| 1922-23, say .. | 250,000                | 30 6 8                               | 20 0 0                        | 7,583,333                                  | 5,000,000                                                       |
|                 | 1,735,494              | ..                                   | ..                            | 41,734,012                                 | 43,432,347                                                      |

Freight and handling on 1,735,494 tons Australian Sugar from Home Ports to Refining Ports, say, at 20s. per ton .. ..

1,735,494

..

Mr. Pratten.

£43,469,506

£43,432,347



I will admit that, for eighteen months, had there been no sugar control, the retail price for sugar would have been 1d. or 2d. more than was paid; and that farmers, sugar-growers and millers, were—for eighteen months at the outside—supplying sugar more cheaply than the price for which it could have been imported. But eighteen months more, completing the three years of the present agreement, will make up for this sacrifice—if it was a sacrifice.

Mr. WATT.—Honours are easy.

Mr. PRATTEN.—Clearly that is so. If the question is brought down to a money basis, at the end of the present agreement Australia will owe nothing to the sugar industry, and the sugar industry will owe nothing to Australia. There is, of course, in addition, the strong feeling against black labour in Australia, and I have emphasized only the money basis. The figures I have given dissipate the claims made by special propagandists of this industry that Australian consumers owe so much to the local sugar-growers.

Mr. WATT.—And, of course, Australia has done nothing for the Queensland growers?

Mr. PRATTEN.—Australia has not done much for the growers during the last seven years. The Queensland grower, although he has received a little more than imported foreign parity, has not received enough on the average, including some never recurring world's high prices, considering that he has to employ white labour in competition with the black labour of other countries.

I wish to say a word or two in regard to Government control in the future. I believe that the industry should be stabilized; but, unfortunately, throughout all the controversies dealing with the sugar question this industry has apparently always been in the position of a quasi-political shuttlecock—black labour *versus* white labour, private enterprise *versus* nationalization, the sugar producers pitted against the fruit-growers, and in one way or another sugar has been throughout its whole history the football of politics. I have heard during my short experience of Parliament honorable members storming at the large profits made from the industry by the Colonial Sugar Refining Company. I know that those honorable members believe in the nationalization of the sugar industry; but, in my opinion,

the Colonial Sugar Refining Company has done much for Queensland, and its scientific administration is a credit to Australian industrial development. The large profits that are made by that company are made by the application of science to industry rather than by making a large percentage of profit upon the turnover.

Mr. BAYLEY.—That was proved by the Royal Commission.

Mr. PRATTEN.—I thank the honorable member for that confirmation.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Order!

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—The manager of the company refused to give evidence before the Commission.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Order!

Mr. PRATTEN.—We have only had from the Government a summarized financial statement covering seven years' balances, but the Minister has promised to give us the details. [*Extension of time granted.*] As for the future, I believe it is the function of the Government to govern, and not to trade, and also that a Government, and Parliament, too, should remain at the helm of the ship of State, and not traffic in or muddle with its cargo. I am not a believer in governmental interference with trade, commerce, industry, and production, because the facts prove that where governmental interference has taken place, especially during the last seven years, in the State of Queensland and the State of New South Wales, and also in some activities of the Commonwealth, generally speaking, the successes achieved have been few and the failures have been many. The whole sugar position shows that Government trading, like many other methods of trading during the jumping peaks of recent world prices, has not always been as satisfactory as we could have wished. But although it is clear that huge purchases of sugar were made at high prices, it is very difficult to criticise such purchases during the period in which they were made, because those were times of rapid and unexpected deflation in many quarters, and scores of business men have, to my own personal knowledge, been caught in the same way, and many firms have had to go bankrupt owing to misjudgment during periods of inflation.

I do not think that the sugar industry can be stabilized without the widest discussion, as it is perhaps from the producing, commercial, manufacturing, distributing, and political sides the most complicated problem that Parliament will be called upon to settle. I do not believe that any academic inquiry, or a desire for political expediency, will give a permanent solution of this very knotty problem. As a Protectionist, and as one who has always advocated a White Australia, and also—and this is important—an Australia self-contained and self-supporting as far as possible, I will not by my vote do anything to unfairly prejudice the fine sugar industry of Queensland. The policy of this Parliament should be directed along the lines of importing as little as we can, and exporting as much as we can, so that we may thereby get a favorable balance of trade, and pay off some of our debts abroad. The fruit-growers' interest also must be considered, for in acreage, production, and employment, direct and indirect, their interests exceed those of the sugar industry, important as that is. There is more fruit produced now than can be consumed in the Commonwealth, and the acreage is rapidly increasing, and if expansion in this industry is desired the local consumption of commodities composed of fruit and sugar must not be checked by dear sugar. Sugar at world's parity should be available for the export trade.

Mr. RODGERS.—It is at present.

Mr. PRATTEN.—Not quite. Users could import Java sugar for £20 a ton, and the Government are charging them £24. After the expiry of the existing agreement we shall still have to consider the sugar problem. The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Charlton) indicated last night that the next Parliament would have to consider that question. I hope that this Parliament will deal with it.

Mr. CHARLTON.—I said that we should have to consider the agreement at a later date.

Mr. PRATTEN.—I have much more pleasure in advocating the consideration of this question by the present Parliament than I would have in leaving it to be dealt with by the next Parliament, because, so far as I know, the next Parliament will not be in working order until after the new sugar agreement, if there is to be one, must be considered.

All honorable members wish to get down to a fair deal for the sugar-grower, a fair deal for the consumer, and a fair deal for the fruit-grower, always remembering that sugar can be grown only in the tropics, and, unlike other great protected industries, is subjected entirely to the competition of the product of black labour.

My own attitude regarding the future is that I shall be reluctant to vote for any sort of Government control, as I do not think that it will permanently stabilize the industry, which is what I desire to achieve, and in no circumstances can I vote for any solution of the sugar question that will include further Government trading. After a very close investigation of the position, with my sympathies all in favour of Australian industry and enterprise, especially those carried on within the tropics, I do not think that the industry can expect to receive in any future arrangements the present rates. Varying statements are made as to what will be a fair price. The Royal Commission considered that £22 per ton to the grower and miller in the interim was a fair and profitable price. Others connected with the industry to whom I have talked mentioned £24, £26, and £28 per ton for raw sugar. The *Sugar Journal* has stated recently that the producers must receive £26 10s. per ton for raw sugar if the industry is to be stabilized. Senator Crawford, representing the Queensland growers, in 1912 suggested a duty of £7 per ton, but I admit that since that date a good deal has happened. The present world position, particularly in Java, which largely governs parity so far as sugar is concerned in the southern hemisphere, seems to indicate that the crops of mill white sugar will be offered at about £15 per ton. In all probability, £4 or £5 per ton must be added to this price for railage to shipping points, freights, exchange, insurance, &c., to importing points. Therefore, the competition which the Queensland industry will have to meet will be about £20 per ton for Java mill white sugar, c.i.f., Australian ports. In my opinion, a duty of 1d. per lb. would stabilize the Queensland sugar industry.

Mr. HIGGS. — It would not be half enough.

Mr. PRATTEN.—Householders will not generally use mill white sugar. There



is no refined sugar as such coming from Java. Therefore, Java quality would only come into competition with Queensland mill white sugar, and would be used largely for manufacturing purposes only. It is quite as suitable as any other sort for many of such purposes.

Mr. RODGERS.—No fear!

Mr. PRATTEN.—For manufacturing many things Java sugar is quite as suitable as the Colonial Sugar Refining Company's refined sugar, and gives equally good results. That is the point of difference we have to consider in connexion with the competition of Java mill white sugar. If we were to impose a duty of 1d. per lb. on raw sugar we would stabilize the industry. Those who believe in the policy of a White Australia ought to be satisfied to pay 1d. per lb. on sugar for the maintenance of such a policy. With a reduced distribution cost, with slightly lower prices to the cane-grower and mill-owner, and a duty of 1d. per lb. on mill white sugar to stabilize the industry, a fair wholesale price should be 3d. per lb. for mill white sugar, and 3½d. per lb. for refined; and leaving the matter of distribution to competition among the distributors. After the expiration of the present agreement refined sugar ought to be put in the hands of the public at 4d. per lb., and mill white at 3½d. per lb.

Industries consuming fruit and to whom sugar is a raw material could, by a system of levy among the mill-owners and cane-growers for the purpose, get their raw material at a reasonably low price, so that the consumers of these commodities, even within the Commonwealth, would not be prejudiced by dear sugar. I think the mill-owners and cane-growers should give their brethren who grow fruit the opportunity of converting their product into canned fruits or jams.

Mr. AUSTIN CHAPMAN.—Why all this nursing?

Mr. PRATTEN.—I am merely drawing attention to the important points that have arisen in connexion with the sugar industry. I believe that in order to stabilize this industry in Queensland it may be necessary to have some form of co-operation. The Colonial Sugar Refining Company has only eight crushing mills in Queensland and New South

Wales, and there are twenty-nine other mills in operation. Government help would probably be necessary to stimulate the co-operation I suggest. I think also that the Queensland arbitration laws should co-ordinate sugar awards with the industrial position in other parts of the Commonwealth. I have endeavoured to place some facts before the House in regard to this matter. I want to give fair play to the Queensland sugar industry, and I want also honorable members to remember, seeing that this Parliament passed the present agreement, that they should have no quarrel with it. The agreement was deliberately entered into and approved by Parliament, and on the figures I have quoted has averaged out as expected.

Mr. WATT.—Was the agreement approved by Parliament?

Mr. PRATTEN.—It went through both Houses, and every honorable member who voted for it or refrained from voting against it was responsible for it.

Mr. RODGERS.—Hear, hear!

Mr. PRATTEN.—We have also to remember that during the first year of the agreement Australian consumers of sugar got their sugar at considerably less than the world's parity; that is to say, at considerably less than they would have had to pay had there been no sugar industry in existence in Australia. In the third year, I admit, the consumers have had to make this good; but we must be fair to the sugar industry, and on the figures I have quoted we have been barely fair, and have given no favours. Seeing that the figures put forward seem to prove that, on the whole seven years' operations of the sugar control, the growers and millers have been getting about the world's parity, we should now be in a position to reconsider the whole situation on a fair basis. There seem to be no obligations on either side.

In setting this case before the House, I have placed before honorable members four tables of calculation. The first shows what every one has got out of the sugar control. The second deals with the quantity and average price of importations during the period of control. The third covers the financial position. Honorable members will remember that the Minister has told us that about £1,000,000

has been paid in duty, a fact that must be taken into consideration now in Table C.

Mr. RODGERS.—It was over £1,000,000.

Mr. PRATTEN.—My last table gives a comparison between the Queensland parity and the world's parity during the whole period covered by the agreements. I am anxious to arrive at a basis of stability for the sugar industry. It has been made the football of politics long enough. The Minister has promised us a full and audited account of the sugar figures from year to year and from period to period.

Mr. RODGERS.—Do not forget that the net profit on Australian sugar at the present time is £6 6s. 2d. per ton.

Mr. PRATTEN.—If the millers and cane-growers get £30 6s. 8d. per ton, and the Colonial Sugar Refining Company £6 16s. 6d. per ton for handling and refining, according to the figures given by the Prime Minister in reply to a question, at a wholesale price of sugar of £47 per ton the Government must be getting more than the figure mentioned by the Minister. My whole desire is to get at the facts. There have been many allusions to different aspects of this question; but each honorable member is anxious to get at the truth. I have endeavoured to get as close to it as possible in my address. I have not touched upon the amendment because I believe that the sugar deficit at the present time is in the region of £255,000, as stated by the Minister, and because, if the amendment were carried, it would immediately impose on the taxpayers of the Commonwealth a loss on sugar which I consider should not be placed upon them.

Mr. FLEMING (Robertson) [9.26].—The amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Charlton) has already proved valuable, because it has helped to put honorable members *au fait* with the present position of sugar. The speech just delivered by the honorable member for Parramatta (Mr. Pratten), with all its detail, has been most enlightening. I do not intend to deal with detailed figures. The honorable member has done sufficient in that direction. I want to say a few words on the broad principles of the question.

The first step taken by the Commonwealth Government in this matter was to fix the price of sugar at £18 per ton. That price was raised in 1918 to £21 per ton, and had the Government of the day allowed sugar-growing and crushing to be carried on in a natural fashion there would have been very little, if any, of the trouble that has since arisen. But I am informed that at the time the Government stipulated that the area under cane was not to be extended, and that no improvements were to be made to the mills. It was a case of helping the industry on the one hand and strangling it on the other.

Mr. CORSER.—That stipulation was withdrawn at once.

Mr. FLEMING.—As a result of the adoption of that policy, 20,000 acres went out of cane cultivation.

Mr. CORSER.—That was because of the Dickson award.

Mr. FLEMING.—That award increased the cost of production in other directions; but other primary producers of Queensland extended their production to meet the demands of the times, so that Australia could be kept going during the war period. The chief cause for the reduction of the area under cane was the stipulation of the Government that there should be no increase in the area under crop, and that the mills should not increase their capacity. We have been told by the Government, and by their supporters, time and time again, that the people of Australia have had cheaper sugar than was procurable by people in other parts of the world; but that was because the grower had to produce at a cheaper rate. While the Commonwealth Government were paying £56 per ton for 116,000 tons of sugar purchased in Java, the cane-grower in Australia was getting only £30 6s. 8d. per ton. The Government boasted that the people of Australia were getting the cheapest sugar in the world. At whose expense? Not the Government's. It was at the expense of the men who were responsible for producing the article. The Government has put a distinct black mark against the industry, inasmuch as it has been overcharging the people, not for the benefit of the grower and the producer—not of the man who does the work on the farm—but in order to pay the increased



cost for the imported sugar. The Government's statement that we have been getting cheaper sugar is really an argument against the interference with the industry. We are told that the Government have had to charge this increased rate to make up the losses. This increased rate is a burden not only on the sugar industry of Queensland, but on the fruit and dairying industries throughout Australia. A penny per lb. increase means about £50 per acre to the man who is growing soft fruits, however they may be preserved. It is essential, from the point of view of production, that we should have sugar at as reasonable a price as it can be produced at, but we are not in a position to know what is the proper price. The balance-sheet presented to us by the Government leads us nowhere. I have spent some time over it, and I defy any one to get any real satisfaction out of it. The whole of the accounts are lumped over the whole of the seven years, and it is impossible to arrive at any information which would lead to a satisfactory conclusion either for or against the agreement and the results of the trading in sugar. There are, however, one or two points in the balance-sheet that are worthy of mention. In the profit and loss account we are told that the interest on overdraft paid to the Commonwealth Bank is £248,076 10s. 6d., and this, of course, is put down as a charge against sugar. But we know that there was a profit made in the dealings with sugar in the early stages, and it would be very interesting to know whether the sugar account has been credited with the interest on this profit during the whole of the years under consideration.

Mr. RODGERS.—The House appropriated that to revenue in June, 1917.

Mr. FLEMING.—The whole of the facts should be set out in order that we may see what the balance is. This is supposed to be a balance-sheet, and I ask whether a board of directors would bring down a statement of that kind to their shareholders.

Mr. RODGERS.—They would.

Mr. FLEMING.—We are not shareholders, but we are the board of directors acting for the people, and we should know what the figures are—we should know the whole position. This statement is simply brought down here and flung on the table, and we know nothing at all

about the details. Then, in the operating and trading accounts, there is an item, "Cyclone damage, 1918, sugar, £210,608," and of this we have had no explanation. We are also told that there was sea-damaged sugar to the extent of £2,217. These are, however, small matters for consideration alongside the remarks of the Auditor-General, which seem to disclose a very serious position—

The foregoing statements of accounts have been audited by an Audit Inspector, acting under my direction, the statements having been submitted for examination on 14th July (instant). After examination, the statements were again submitted in the present form this day, and they have been further submitted to audit.

Why should these statements have to be submitted twice to audit? Is it because on the first occasion they were not satisfactory? The Auditor-General goes on to say—

The transactions of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company and the Millaquin Sugar Company had previously been audited by the Audit Inspector specially appointed to examine the accounts of these companies, such accounts having been passed to the 30th September, 1921, and the 31st December, 1921, respectively. The transactions since those dates, and the figures for which have been incorporated in the above statement, were supported by the certificates of the respective general managers, as also have the figures relating to the value of stocks stated to be on hand at the 30th June, 1922. These figures, therefore, remain to be verified by the Auditor Inspector when making his next visit and conducting his audits at the offices of the companies concerned.

Subject to the foregoing remarks, and to the verifications referred to, the above statements are certified to be correct.

We are asked to accept this balance-sheet, yet we are told by the Auditor-General that figures remain to be verified. What is the use of a statement of accounts like that?

Mr. RODGERS.—I fully explained the qualification.

Mr. FLEMING.—This kind of balance-sheet only leads to further confusion, and at present the position is confused enough, simply because we cannot get at the facts. It is impossible at the present stage to know where we stand—to know what sugar really costs, and at what price it can be sold. When the present amendment has been disposed of, I propose to move the following:—

- (a) That consideration of the question of the price of sugar be postponed until Wednesday next, and for the tabling

of full details of the sugar position as promised by the Minister for Trade and Customs.

- (b) That a Select Committee of the House be appointed to inquire into the question of the Government transactions in sugar and to report to this House.

Mr. CHARLTON.—You are a “bridge-builder”!

Mr. FLEMING.—It is strange that I should be called a “bridge-builder” by a member of this House.

*Several honorable members interjecting,*

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. Sir Elliot Johnson).—I shall name the next honorable member who interjects after I have called for order. I have before appealed to honorable members, and I do not propose to injure my throat by repeated and vain appeals for order.

Mr. FLEMING.—We believe that there is a possibility that sugar can be produced and sold at a lower price, but we cannot speak definitely until we know the position in regard to the grower and the producer. All we know at present is that the grower gets  $\frac{3}{4}$ d., labour  $2\frac{1}{4}$ d., the Commonwealth 1d., the refiner  $\frac{5}{8}$ d., and the wholesaler and grocer  $1\frac{1}{8}$ d. It will be seen that the grower gets least of all except the refiner, though the grower has to do all the work, go to the expense of clearing his property, and of putting in his cane and waiting for it to mature, while running the risk of cyclones and other occurrences that destroy his sugar and his market; and the  $\frac{3}{4}$ d. has to cover the cost of labour and everything. It looks pretty evident that the grower is not getting as fair a deal as he should. We cannot say, with this present statement before us, that the Government can sell sugar at 4d.,  $4\frac{1}{2}$ d., or 5d., and we think that we ought to have a definite and clear knowledge of the position. In our opinion, the Government have handled the whole sugar question in a way that has damaged both the consumer and the producer. Unless the Government can bring down a statement which will put us in a position to know where we stand—which will show that the Government have saved the country money, and that the damage which has been done to the industry is only temporary, I do not think there will be anybody amongst honorable members opposite who will be able to call me a bridge-

builder. At present it is impossible to say where we stand; when we have the figures before us, we shall be able to speak in a very definite way.

Mr. SCULLIN (Yarra) [9.40].—I have been very interested in the last two speeches that have been delivered. The honorable member for Robertson (Mr. Fleming) is very critical of the Government; he charged it with having damaged the interests of both consumer and producers, yet he proceeded to “build a bridge” for the Government to climb over to safety. Such an attitude is typical of honorable members in the corner. In my judgment, their attitude is one that does not commend itself to self-respecting members of Parliament. We saw, during the evening, the Government Whip busier in the corner whipping up the Country party than he was on the Government side; and the Government Whip was apparently just as successful here as was the “whip” that was cracked in the Caucus room to-day. The honorable member for Parramatta (Mr. Pratten) for an hour and a half gave us a speech in which he criticised the Government and condemned its figures; he proved, by logic and facts, that the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Charlton) is practical, and can be carried out; and then he proceeded to find a lot of reasons for voting against the amendment. The “whip” had been cracked in the Caucus chamber. The honorable member went on to express a lot of sympathy for the poor consumer; but sympathy is not of much good to those who are paying 6d. per lb. for sugar.

I propose to briefly review the sugar agreements, and the conditions that led up to them. I shall show that the motives that prompted the first agreement have absolutely changed in the case of the existing arrangement. I shall show, by an analysis of the figures, that the same power that dominated the industry before Government control is dominating it almost as effectively now. The honorable member for Parramatta said that he would be reluctant to vote for Government control. But what is the alternative? To go back to the control of the company which has this industry in its grasp? I remember that, in 1911, when I was a member of this House, there was a



strike amongst the cane-cutters for 30s. and keep for a week of forty-eight hours, and the grower proved beyond dispute that he could not afford to pay such a wage. It was shown that the Colonial Sugar Refining Company had the growers in their power to such an extent that they had to sweat their workers, who certainly laboured under the most unfavorable conditions possible. I have looked up the press of that time, and I should like to read a quotation from a special article that appeared in the *Age* of 4th August, 1911. It was written by a man who had investigated all the circumstances, and it contained the following:—

The Colonial Sugar Refining Company controls the price which the consumer must pay for sugar. Then, seeing that the company fixes the price for raw sugar, the sugar monopoly also regulates the price paid to the cane-grower for his raw material. Every stage of the industry, from the growing of the cane to the bagging of the finished article, is ordered and directed by the Colonial Sugar Refining Company. Its vice-like hold upon one of the necessities of human life is a most striking example of commercial monopoly, probably without a parallel in any part of the world

In a leading article published a week later, namely, on 11th August, the *Age* wrote—

The Government should have long ago taken a hand in the matter by the establishment of a national refinery.

At that time the *Age* was advocating Government control, and was engaged in a dispute with the present Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes), who was then Attorney-General, as to the constitutional power of the Commonwealth to establish a national refinery.

Mr. MAXWELL.—When was that?

Mr. SCULLIN.—On 11th August, 1911. In 1912 the Fisher Government appointed a Royal Commission to inquire into the sugar industry, and Mr. Knox, managing director of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, was among the witnesses examined by that Commission. He was asked—

Did the Colonial Sugar Refining Company contribute £50,000 to support the opposition to the proposed law to alter the Constitution relating to monopolies which was submitted to the electors on 26th April, 1911?

Mr. Knox replied—

That is a matter I am not prepared to give information upon.

He was then asked, "You did not make the contribution?" His answer, and I ask honorable members to note it, was,

"I do not say we did not make the contribution. We did not make that contribution." The contribution might have been more or less than £50,000.

I come now to the several agreements that have been made. The first of these, drawn up in 1915, was made between two Labour Governments—the Fisher Government and the Ryan Administration. I invite honorable members to contrast these agreements and the principles underlying them. If they do they will discover some reasons why there is an outcry at the present time against Government control. It is not so much a question of Government control as it is a question of proper control in the interests of the consumers and the producers as against control in the interests of the capitalists. The agreement, made between the Fisher Government and the Ryan Government of Queensland in 1915, was for a period of two years. It provided that in 1915-16 the grower and miller should receive £18 per ton for raw sugar, and that the retail price should be 3d. per lb. For the second year it provided, so as to allow for increased costs in 1917, that the grower and miller should receive £21 per ton for raw sugar, and that the retail price of sugar should be 3½d. per lb. The increase in the price paid to the grower and miller for raw sugar was equal to 16 per cent., and the increase in the retail price was also 16 per cent. This shows that the makers of the first agreement realized that when the price of the raw sugar was increased to the extent of 16 per cent., a like increase should be made in the retail price. Keeping that in mind, let us examine the arrangement entered into by the present Government in 1920. Under a former agreement the grower was receiving £14 per ton and the miller £7 per ton, while the retail price was fixed at £32 13s. 4d. per ton, or 3½d. per lb. Under the new agreement made in 1920 the grower receives £19 6s. 8d. per ton and the miller £11 per ton. The retail price is £56 per ton, or 6d. per lb.

Dr. EARLE PAGE.—The retail price is not fixed in the agreement.

Mr. SCULLIN.—I did not say that it was, but it is fixed by the Government. I am pointing out that under the agreement the Government have provided for

increased prices for the grower and the miller, and that that increase has been carried on to the retailer by the Government itself. Under this new agreement of 1920 there was an increase of £5 6s. 8d. per ton to the grower, and an increase of £4 per ton to the miller, whereas the increase in respect of refining and distribution was raised to the extent of £23 6s. 8d. per ton. The increase to the growers is equal to 30 per cent., and to the millers 57 per cent.; while the refining and distribution cost has increased to the extent of 71 per cent. I know that the objection will be raised that the retail price was fixed at the high rate of 6d. per lb. to make good the losses incurred on imported sugar. Let us, then, take the position as proposed by the Minister for Trade and Customs when the deficit shall have been wiped off, and when he is not going to take into the Consolidated Revenue anything in respect of sugar. The retail price is then to be 5d. per lb. The increase in the price paid to the grower, as compared with that ruling under the old arrangement, will then be 30 per cent., and to the miller 57 per cent., whereas the increase in the retail price will be 42 per cent. And yet we have the Prime Minister trying to camouflage the facts, when replying to the Leader of the Labour party (Mr. Charlton), by saying, "Look at the white men in the cane-fields bearing the heat and burden of the day!" He raised the cry of a White Australia, and pictured the plight of the poor white man working in the cane-fields; the suggestion being that the benefit of these increased prices was going wholly to the white workers and the growers. The actual position under the present arrangement is, however, that the increase to the grower is 30 per cent., to the miller 57 per cent., and to the refiners and distributors 71 per cent. The arrangement was made practically in the interests of the Government's supporters—the capitalistic class.

Mr. RODGERS.—That cock will not fight.

Mr. SCULLIN.—Proof of my statement is to be found in these figures, and the Government cannot get away from them. It is for the Minister to show why, in the original agreement made between the Fisher Government and the Ryan Government, when the price for raw sugar was increased by 16 per cent.,

the retail price was increased to exactly the same extent. How does he justify the present arrangement, under which, while the increase to the grower is 30 per cent. and to the miller 57 per cent., the increase in respect of refining and distribution is 71 per cent.? Even when the deficit has been wiped out, the increase to the grower, according to the Minister's own statement, will be 30 per cent., to the miller 57 per cent., and to the refiners and distributors 42 per cent.

Let us come now to another phase of this question. We were told that we had to pay a high price for sugar because of a local shortage, and the fact that importations at high prices had consequently to be made. I propose to give some reasons why we had a shortage and a deficit. I shall show some of the actions of this Government, and what they permitted to go on. We are told, in a semi-official report representing the views of the Government, that the deliveries of sugar at the end of 1919 were extraordinarily heavy, being 30,000 tons more than the deliveries for a similar period in any previous year. What is the significance of that statement? I ask honorable members to recall what happened in 1919—during the period immediately preceding the increase in the retail price. It was well known in trade circles for many months that the price of sugar had to go up. Authoritative statements to that effect were made. Every one in the trade knew of this, and it was exactly at this time that the deliveries of sugar were 30,000 tons in excess of the deliveries for a similar period in any previous year. We were told again and again that the reason why people could not obtain the sugar they required at that time was that there was a strike in progress. Yet here we have the facts set out in a semi-official report that the deliveries from the mills and the refining companies were 30,000 tons more than the quantity received in the same quarter in any previous year.

Mr. ATKINSON.—Who was to blame for that?

Mr. SCULLIN.—I shall tell the House. The reason was that the Government allowed their "pals" to stock their big warehouses up to the ceilings with sugar in anticipation of the heavy rise to come. I know something of what was



going on at the time. I saw truckloads of sugar arriving at different stations, and going into stores and barns. They were camouflaged with bags of wheat. There were Government officials who knew of the existence of these stocks, while at the same time housewives were being supplied with 3 lbs. or 2 lbs. of white sugar, and had to take 6 lbs. or 12 lbs. of black sugar.

Mr. GREENE.—I ask the honorable member to give the names of the Government officials who knew of these stocks of sugar.

Mr. SCULLIN.—For an obvious reason, the honorable gentleman is not going to obtain their names from me. I know, also, that some very strong supporters of honorable members opposite profited to the extent of thousands of pounds while they were dealing out to the consumers 2 lbs. and 3 lbs. of white sugar for every 7 lbs. or 8 lbs. of black sugar which they were required to take. Proof of my statement is to be found in the fact that, as soon as the retail price of sugar was raised to 6d. per lb., consumers could buy sugar by the dozen lbs.

Mr. MAXWELL.—Did the honorable member report the matter at the time to the proper authorities.

Mr. SCULLIN.—The Government was well aware of what was going on. I wrote to several newspapers drawing attention to it, but not one of my letters was published.

I want to give another reason why the importations of sugar at the time in question should have been exceedingly heavy if a clause inserted in the 1918 agreement was worth anything. That agreement was made when a Labour Government no longer ruled in the Federal arena. A clause was inserted in it to the effect that the Queensland Government should not, during 1918-19, erect, assist, or encourage the building of any new mills. The removing or enlarging of existing mills was also prohibited. The excuse offered for the insertion of this provision is that the Government wished to avoid a surplus production in Australia. And yet we have the same Government offering as a reason for the high price of sugar the fact that they were compelled to import dear sugar.

Mr. CORSER.—We started that season with a six months' surplus.

Mr. SCULLIN.—That is no excuse for the insertion of a clause in the 1918 agreement designed to limit the production of sugar in this country.

Mr. CORSER.—It did not affect the production of sugar in the Commonwealth.

Mr. SCULLIN.—It will remain for the honorable member to justify in his own constituency such a provision in the agreement. I draw the special attention of the honorable member for Fawkner (Mr. Maxwell) to these facts, because he attended a meeting of housewives, and told the audience that it was the sugar-growers who were penalizing the fruit-growers. He had not one word to say about the people who raked in the profits after the grower had been satisfied. The grower is, probably, getting a very reasonable return for his labour. He is, perhaps, better off than he ever was. I do not believe the people of Australia will begrudge the grower and the worker what they are getting out of this agreement; but they certainly object to the big profits that are being raked off by the capitalists. When the growers were getting £14 a ton for their sugar in the second and third year covered by the original agreement, the retail price was £32 13s. 4d., or 3½d. per lb. In other words, the cost from the grower to the consumer was £18 13s. 4d. per ton. Under the scheme outlined by the Minister, leaving out of consideration altogether the disturbing element of imported sugar, and taking the proposal that the retail price shall be 5d. per lb. after the deficit has been wiped out, the cost from the grower to the consumer will be not £18 13s. 4d., but £27 6s. 8d. per ton. The cost of handling has been increased to the extent of £8 13s. 4d. per ton, or 46 per cent., since the 1918 agreement.

The Minister submitted to us a few days ago a balance-sheet covering the seven years' period of Government control. I want to know why an annual balance-sheet was not submitted. When we asked the Minister for details we were told that they could not be supplied because we were in the middle of the financial year. Have we been in the middle of a financial year for the last seven years? Can that excuse be offered for the failure to supply details in respect of the preceding six years?

Mr. RODGERS.—Some details are given.



Mr. SCULLIN.—We are not given any details. We are supplied with a balance-sheet which is misleading to the people as a whole. Upon examining that balance-sheet I find a sum of £415,000 included in the sugar account as an asset. Answering a statement by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Charlton) last night, the Minister for Trade and Customs (Mr. Rodgers) said that that sum had been appropriated to revenue. Upon examining Budget statements of recent years, I find specific reference to an estimated sum of £500,000. May I presume that that represents this sum at present under discussion?

Mr. RODGERS.—No!

Mr. SCULLIN.—The Minister says that £415,000 was appropriated to the revenue.

Mr. RODGERS.—That is so—by the sanction of Parliament.

Mr. SCULLIN.—Then it has gone into the Treasury. It no longer belongs to the sugar account. If I, as the manager of a company, am presenting a balance-sheet to an auditor, and if I point to a credited sum of £50 and say that during the period under review I gave it away to a hospital, would he permit me to show it on my balance-sheet? It is gone. I cannot regard it as an asset.

Mr. RODGERS.—Does the honorable member realize that there are two distinct entities involved—one the Board of Sugar Control, and the other the Commonwealth Treasury?

Mr. SCULLIN.—This amount cannot be given away to one of those two entities and be still retained by the other and included as one of its assets. I thank the Minister for emphasizing my point. This sugar account is not a Government account. The only connexion that the Government have with it, outside of the scope of the agreement itself, consists of the advance of loans to the Colonial Sugar Refining Company to finance its purchases. But here is a sum of £415,000 which nearly six years ago was lifted from out of the profits of the sugar account and handed over to the Treasury to swell the revenue of the country. Then, what is it doing here as an asset in the sugar account?

Mr. CORSER.—Does the honorable member know that the Prime Minister twéed in this House that the producers Ryan G. understand that not a raw sug-

single farthing would go into the Consolidated Revenue accounts?

Mr. SCULLIN.—Well, if the right honorable gentleman said that, it merely adds to his already long list of broken pledges—a list which would reach to the full length of this chamber. If the Prime Minister actually said in this chamber—as his supporter, the honorable member for Wide Bay, avows—that not one penny of the profits from sugar would go into the revenue of this country, and if the Minister for Trade and Customs is correct when he now tells the House that a sum of £415,000 has gone into the revenue, I emphatically insist that that assurance of the Prime Minister was no more than another of his broken promises. I want to find out what that £415,000 is doing here as an asset if it was given away to the Treasurer six years ago. I suggest that the Government are going to hand that sum back—but only temporarily—as a book-keeping entry, as something with which to square the ledger for the time being. I say that because, if it is an asset on paper, the amount must be put back. But eventually it will have to come back in cash unless the Government are going to make it up again out of the pockets of the people. Here is the crux of the whole situation: The reason why the Government propose to charge the people 6d. per lb. to the end of October is that thus they will be able to get the £415,000 back again. It was wrong to have taken the sum out of the sugar account originally. I repeat that it is an account covering various private interests. It was wrong to have taken that amount out, even though the deal was sanctioned by Parliament itself. But, although it was wrong to have done so, it is still more improper now to propose to put it back without the sanction of Parliament. Parliament should insist that the £415,000 taken from sugar profits should be returned legally. If the money was put into the Treasury, what right have the Government to present it as an asset in the sugar account?

Mr. RODGERS.—What right has the Sugar Control Board to show it as such? Will the honorable member deal with the facts?

Mr. SCULLIN.—The Minister is now sheltering behind the Board, yet he stood in his place only a few days ago and said,



"I will take the responsibility for the accuracy of every statement I make, and for the correctness of every figure I use." The fact is that the Government have muddled and bungled the proposition, and that this is a muddled and bungled balance-sheet. If the Government sought to give the people the facts they would not have placed such a document before Parliament.

The Minister for Trade and Customs informed the House that the Colonial Sugar Refining Company had worked at cost price, and had made no profits.

Mr. RODGERS.—I said no such thing.

Mr. SCULLIN.—Well, that the company had worked and had handled the sugar at cost.

Mr. RODGERS.—The refining was done at cost. The company did other work.

Mr. SCULLIN.—This is the first occasion on which I have heard the Colonial Sugar Refining Company referred to as philanthropists, even though they did give £50,000—the amount may have been less, but may also have been considerably more—in order to insure the defeat of the Constitution referendum having to do with the control of monopolies. As a matter of fact, they are getting £1 2s. 6d. per ton—over and above the cost of refining, of distributing, of bags and freight, and of everything else—in recompense for what is euphemistically termed "management." That sum of £1 2s. 6d. per ton is neither more nor less than so much "bunce" to the company. I estimate that they have made out of the sugar agreements more than £2,000,000. So much for their philanthropy! The great bulk of their transactions during the past financial year has consisted of the handling of this sugar, and the company have declared the biggest dividend announced for years; they have made a profit of 17.39 per cent.

Honorable members were informed by the Minister in this balance-sheet that, to the 30th June last, the deficit amounted to £255,000. The Government intend that the consumer shall continue to pay 6d. per lb. for four months from the 30th June last. I calculate that there will have been consumed in that period more than 90,000 tons of sugar. Thus, the Government will be provided with a profit of more than £800,000.

Rushing to the rescue of the Minister for Trade and Customs, two honorable members opposite have delivered themselves of weighty opinions. I have sought to examine the remarks both of the honorable member for Wide Bay (Mr. Corser) and of the honorable member for Parramatta (Mr. Pratten). I have done my best to probe their excuses for the robbery of the people. First, I shall examine certain statements of the honorable member for Wide Bay, who, however, does not accept responsibility for what he has said. When the Leader of the Opposition was speaking last night, and at the moment when he was pointing out that the Government would make a profit of £800,000 during the four months in which the retail price of 6d. per lb. would continue to be enforced, the honorable member for Wide Bay interjected, "But you do not know at what price their stocks have been purchased. You do not know if it was sugar purchased at £80 per ton or not." The honorable member was asked if he knew, and he said he did not know. I do not think he did, but I intend submitting some facts which, by a little deduction, will prove that his suggestion is wrong. I shall quote the estimated figures of the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) which he submitted in a statement read in this House, and which was prepared for him by the Department. On page 949 of *Hansard* of the 30th March, 1920, the Prime Minister said that he estimated that from 110,000 to 130,000 tons would have to be imported to enable us to carry on until the 1920-21 sugar crop was harvested. I wish honorable members to note that the harvesting of the crop usually begins about this time of the year; and when the Prime Minister spoke on the 30th March he said we wanted 110,000 tons to carry us over until the next harvest. Although our imported requirements were estimated at from 110,000 to 130,000 tons, the actual importations represented 116,000 tons, which was a fairly accurate estimate, and which proved that the sugar imported in 1920-21 was required before July or August of 1920. It would, therefore, be consumed, and the remainder would be Australian sugar.

Mr. CORSER.—The new crop June.



Mr. SCULLIN.—I am repeating the statement of the Prime Minister, which was that the season was late, and that the Government would have to purchase the 110,000 tons to make up the deficiency to the 1st July. The actual importations totalled 116,000 tons, which proves that the sugar imported for that year must have been consumed by July. In 1921 the Australian crop was 295,000 tons; and as our average consumption over the past seven years has been about 275,000 tons—the highest has been 280,000 tons—there was a carry-over from that year, and it is clear that the stock on hand is Australian sugar, which has been purchased for £30 6s. 8d. per ton. What arguments did the honorable member for Parramatta (Mr. Pratten) adduce in defence of this proposal? He suggested that we should continue paying 6d. per lb. for another four months from the end of June, and show a profit of £800,000, in order to wipe out a deficit of £255,000. He also suggested that those who have stocks on hand should get a rebate under the new price, although he showed in his figures that the wholesalers, retailers, handlers, and distributors have done better during the last two years than they have ever done before. That is perfectly true. It is, however, unreasonable to suggest a rebate while the consumer continues to pay the absurdly high price of 6d. per lb. for sugar, particularly when we remember that the rich middlemen made profits on their stocks when the rise was made. The honorable member suggests that those who have reaped a rich harvest should be considered; and that the unfortunate workers should be penalized in order to further increase the profits of those who have done remarkably well out of the industry.

Mr. RODGERS.—The workers in the industry were never better off than they are to-day.

Mr. SCULLIN.—The Minister knows perfectly well that the working men in our midst are still labouring under the greatest possible difficulties owing to the high cost of living and soaring rents.

Mr. RODGERS.—I refer to the workers in the industry.

Mr. SCULLIN.—And I am dealing with the workers of Australia as a whole.

Mr. RODGERS.—That is not an answer to the question.

Mr. SCULLIN.—As I have said, the profit during the next four months will be in the vicinity of £800,000, and it is contended that this amount will be required to wipe out a deficit of £255,000. What is to become of the difference? There was a sinister suggestion in an answer to the question submitted in this Chamber during the last week, when the honorable member for Denison (Mr. Laird Smith) asked the Minister for Trade and Customs if the Government would reduce the price of sugar as soon as they could. The answer was in the affirmative. If there is a deficit of £255,000, and the industry shows a profit during the next four months of £800,000—

Mr. CORSER.—No.

Mr. SCULLIN.—They must show that profit on their own figures. If 90,000 tons is consumed, there must be a profit of £800,000, and one naturally asks what is to become of the difference between the two amounts. The surplus will be carried on for a while, when an adjustment of the accounts will be made. The Government will pat themselves on the back, and say they have no desire to take money out of the pockets of the consumers, and will therefore reduce the price of sugar for three months to 3½d. during the election period.

Mr. BRENNAN.—Election sugar!

Mr. SCULLIN.—That is quite on the cards, and in keeping with the actions of the Government. The present agreement is not equitable, particularly when we are dealing with the Colonial Sugar Refining Company and the distributors of sugar. I have nothing to say against the growers of the cane, but I believe that some of the millers are getting a bigger "cut" out of it than they have had before. The interests of the growers should be considered, because they have had to establish the industry, and have proved beyond all doubt that it is possible for white men to work in the northern parts of this continent. According to the statement of the Minister for Trade and Customs, the quantity of raw sugar purchased was 1,997,178 tons, the refining, bagging, and distribution cost £6,302,930, and the average cost is therefore £3 3s. per ton. It must be remembered that 100 tons of raw sugar is equal to only 94 tons of refined sugar, so that £30 6s. 8d. per ton for raw sugar is